Abstract

Increasing digital disruption is driving the necessity for Omni-Channel Retailing, compelling the integration of online and offline channels. The line between online and physical retailing is blurring as retailers intend to deliver a unified experience anytime anywhere, than a mere channel specific experience. As customer expectation for seamless experience intensifies, and retailers' organizational, operational and technical barriers persist, it would be vital to formulate a suitable strategy towards elevating Omni-Channel Retail Experience. Though prior studies have observed the need for realigning the strategy around combined advantages of multiple channels, there is a limited understanding with regards to key Omni-Channel Capabilities influencing customer experience elements. Besides, it is challenging to adopt all the capabilities within a competitive timeframe. Thus, the importance of prioritizing Omni-Channel capabilities remains fairly underexplored. This research aims to close this gap by ascertaining key Omni-Channel Dimensions and Capabilities influencing experiential aspects, pertaining to Apparel and Fashion retailers, which is a leading category in India. The research employed a Mixed Methods approach using Sequential Exploratory Design comprising a Qualitative study followed by a Quantitative study, examining expert opinions of executives from major Apparel and Fashion retailers in India. The research determines essential capabilities and strategic dimensions from a retailers' perspective, that underpin the key customer experience elements. The findings establish new knowledge in terms of key capabilities considered as top priority, and accordingly build a Capability Priority Framework as a plausible approach to elevate Omni-Channel Retail Experience. The framework serves as an accelerator for retailers and consultants supporting them to build and reinforce key Omni-Channel Capabilities. The research serves as a basis for Organized Retailers in India to realign their strategy towards Omni-Channel transformation, as they embark on this path. It also adds to the current literature and knowledge base on Omni-Channel, providing a conceptual background for further research in this domain.

Key Words: Omni-Channel, Retail, Capabilities, Strategy, Experience, Capability Priority Framework.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Consumers' approach towards locating, buying, and receiving products have transformed, as a result of higher expectations, reduced tolerance, increased technology usage and being better informed than ever before. Shopping experience is expected to be seamless regardless of where within the Retailer's network or whatever retail channels the customers are engaged. With these disruptions trending, researchers and industry experts have often stated that Omni-Channel Strategy is clearly the future of retailing to deliver a universal brand experience than a mere channel experience. This has been compelling Retailers to transform into Omni-Channel hubs that allow customers to shop and interact with the brand, by providing consistent information across multiple channels.

In order to achieve this, they need to revamp their individual functions into integrated operations enabling a unique and seamless interaction between Physical and Digital retail channels, resulting in an elevated Omni-Channel Retail Experience anytime anywhere. As this drives retailers to reform their operating models, redefining their strategy towards Omni-Channel transformation will be one of the critical facet to their sustained competitiveness. But, Retailers are currently challenged on the path to attain a desired state on this journey, and lack empirical support to gain momentum in enhancing the customer experience in the Omni-Channel Retail ecosystem. Due to these dynamics, there arises a need to develop an approach for retailers towards adopting a customer experience centric Omni-Channel Strategy.

A channel is the path through which a retailer provides products and services to consumers (Mehta et al., 2002). In other words, various retail touchpoints or medium through which retailers interact with customers, sell their products or provide other necessary services are termed as channels (Neslin et al., 2006; Zhang et al., 2010). Increasingly, digital channels such as websites, mobile applications, social media pages and kiosks are being added to traditional channels such as Brick-and-Mortar stores, catalogs and customer contact centers (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014). This strategy not only provides a competitive edge to retailers but also greater convenience and seamless experience to consumers. And, with multiple retail channels in the mix, consumers are increasingly moving across different channels during their shopping

journey with retailers (Aubrey & Judge, 2012), be it for product discovery, purchase or post-purchase interactions (Weinberg et al., 2007).

At the outset, Omni-Channel was first described by Rigby (2011) as an integrated sales experience that blends the advantages of physical stores with the information-rich experience of online stores. In the last few years, this definition was extended beyond just integration of channels to the experience that is derived from the integrated combination of these channels. Omnis is a Latin word meaning "all", so Omni-Channel means "all channels together" (Lazaris & Vrechopoulos, 2014). As the channels are managed together, the perceived interaction is not with the channel, but rather the brand (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014). The dominant characteristic of Omni-Channel Retailing phenomenon is that the strategy is centered on the customer and the customer's shopping experience, with a view to offer the shopper a holistic experience (Gupta et al., 2004; Shah et al., 2006).

Traditionally, retailers focused on a single channel to serve customers which essentially use to be a physical store. Even with the present day pure play online retailers, the focus is on single channel which is the online store. This is termed as the Single-Channel strategy of retailers. A single channel is no longer enough, and so the traditional retailers are looking to go online and online retailers are looking at various options to establish a physical presence. The challenge is to find a seamless solution for both customer experience and internal processes (Juaneda-Ayensa et al., 2016). As channels evolved, they started adopting a Multi-Channel strategy, wherein they served customers through multiple touch points that were independent of each other, such as physical store, web, catalogue etc., which worked in silos.

As this trend advanced, Retailers saw merit in integrating the channels to provide blended features such as Buy Online Pickup In-Store, Buy In-Store Deliver to Home etc., leading to the adoption of Cross-Channel strategy, which is mostly regarded as an interim strategy towards Omni-Channel. The next trend in the evolution drive, as observed by several researchers is the Omni-Channel strategy, which is a natural progression from Multi-Channel retailing, eliminating barriers between channels and placing the customer at the center. An Omni-Channel strategy allows customers to seamlessly move across channels within the same transactional boundary of a given shopping engagement. They

will be able to switch between channels irrespective of their location, device, shopping hours etc.

It has been widely realized that online consumers seek more options and have higher expectations. It is up to the retailers how they meet these expectations, and Omni-Channel is an evolving strategy towards achieving this (Strang, 2013). Customers using multiple channels during their purchase journey are referred as Omni-Shoppers who are eager to experiment with new technologies and trends. An Omni-Shopper might research for a product through a mobile app, compare prices across websites through a computer, and finally, purchase the product at a physical store (Juaneda-Ayensa et al., 2016). According to a survey by Comscore (2017), 40% of purchases by customers are made crossing channels, whether searching in-store and purchasing online, or vice versa.

Thus, an Omni-Channel approach to serve these customers through multiple channels, such as mobile, tablet, computer, store, telephone, television, catalog etc., and the resulting experience will stimulate a higher satisfaction, triggering loyalty and brand recognition. While focusing on the basics, Retailers need to establish their Omnipresence with these emerging touch-points. Some of the capabilities that will help retailers succeed are consistent brand messaging, continuous engagement and insightful application of data (Joseph, 2015). Integration of channels from a customer point of view and insight into inventory can be a good starting point. They need to be able to fulfill demand from any channel and from any inventory location (Baird & Kilcourse, 2011).

Most brick-and-mortar retailers believe that with all establishment cost, their offers can never compete with that of pure play online retailers. They foresee Omni-Channel Retailing as a strategy in order to be competitive in the market, by integrating their physical stores with new online channels through a collaborative strategy, instead of building these channels to compete with each other. Their strength lies in in-store shopping experience and they need to play that up (Luo et al., 2016). They also offer proximity to customers and being closer to customers allows Retailers to serve more quickly. Thus, redefining physical stores is critical to competitiveness, which requires optimization of its format and role to meet the expectation of Omni-Shoppers (Cook, 2014).

They need to design an integrated strategy that aligns with the emerging Omni-Channel trend. In doing so, they can reap the best of both physical and digital worlds. In fact, many pure play online retailers are on the other hand investing to establish their physical footprint, reaffirming the advantages of having a physical store as part of their Omni-Channel strategy. As per Singhi et al. (2016), Omni-Channel Retailers are better positioned to offer a seamless experience through the purchase journey than pure play online retailers. An Omni-Channel Retailer incorporating the natural advantage of physical stores in having closer understanding of customer behavior, meet the needs of touch-and-feel and instant gratification, will be in a better position to grab a higher share of wallet compared to pure play online retailers.

Leading in the new age of modern retail, Indian retail is currently at an interesting juncture, as Omni-Channel Retail is poised to drive the future growth of modern retail in India. Newer opportunities of retailing have evolved, encouraging retailers to explore new frontiers. With the transformation of infrastructure taking place at most major Indian cities, the scope of retail has enormously increased. India has been ranked among the top largest retail markets and is the most favored retail destination in the world today. The sector accounts for over 10% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The emergence of Organized Retail formats and the change in attitude of Indian consumers have transformed the face of retailing in India.

Organized Retailing offers huge potential for future growth of retailing in India (Deloitte, 2013; Sharma & Joshi, 2016). As Retailers bring in new and engaging experiences, they should be able to meet the consumer needs along the purchase path, to create an Omni-Channel engagement with curated and personalized offerings anytime and anywhere. They need to build new capabilities to achieve excellence in Omni-Channel Retail Experience such as, Personalized Content and Assortment, In-store Experience with Social Sharing, Virtual Mirror, Endless Aisle, Enhanced Delivery and Pick-up Options and Increased Delivery Speeds (Hübner et al., 2016).

1.1 Problem Description

The line between online and offline retailing is blurring with the advent of advanced technologies, compelling the integration of both the forms. This is creating a

challenging environment for online and offline retailers to compete in new and innovative ways (Brynjolfsson et al., 2013). Many retailers have incorrectly adopted independent channel strategies as Omni-Channel where online channel is independent of offline channel. Multi-Channel platforms (web, mobile, physical store etc.) are technically set up, but are operated as independent business processes, with multiple separate retail channels established by the same Retailer. Each of these channels are treated and managed separately leading to inconsistencies, which must be rationalized aptly (Joseph, 2015).

Moreover, despite the growing importance of customer experience in retail services, academic literature on this topic often lacks investigation of the phenomenon specific to Omni-Channel Retail (Sachdeva & Goel, 2015). Though existing literature provides considerable ground for the concept of customer experience, as careful management of experiences can lead to a greater value delivered to customers, prior studies have given very little attention to retail customer experience in the context of Omni-Channel Retailing. Moreover, researches have tended to neglect the influence of key Omni-Channel Capabilities on the experiential aspects of customers, resulting in limited understanding of the importance of prioritizing the capabilities, and it remains a fairly underexplored area.

Increasingly, technology-based service delivery systems are becoming an integral part of shopping whose manifestation is demonstrated by the emergence of Omni-Channel Retailing, and hence are critical to examine in terms of their impact on customer experience (Verhoef et al., 2009). One of the key capabilities that Retailers in India need to build by the year 2020, in order to win in the digital world, is Omni-Channel Retailing. Whilst Omni-Channel is the impending solution, Retailers are unclear on what to offer and how (Singhi et al., 2016). Moreover, the seamless experience of a true Omni-Channel is still not quite evident particularly with Retailers in India and how close they are in adopting it is unclear. Hence, it is compelling to find the key factors (capabilities) that are imperative in elevating Omni-Channel Retail Experience and the essential capability dimensions they need to focus towards this transformation.

In order to be able to manage customer experiences effectively, it is necessary to understand the Omni-Channel capabilities that influence various experiential aspects.

Scholarly research on customer experience construct in retail environments seems to be scarce and calls for a conceptual framework that can serve as a stimulus and foundation for researches related to this area (Jüttner et al., 2009; Petermans, 2012; Verhoef et al., 2009). This research study, therefore, is to understand the key capabilities that contribute to Omni-Channel Retail Experience among Organized Retailers in India. It examines the conceptual framework of customer experience from an Omni-Channel perspective to determine a plausible approach in terms of key capabilities and dimensions. The research accordingly builds a Capability Priority Framework as an implementable solution for this approach. The framework can be exercised as a guideline by retailers in India to adopt essential Omni-Channel capabilities as they embark on this path.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

1.2.1 Multi-Channel Retailing

Retailing has evolved from time to time to cope with competition, changing consumer demand, globalization and other environmental factors. The theory of Multi-Channel Retailing (Levy et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2010; Beck & Rygl, 2015) describes a retailing strategy of selling products or services by providing value to consumers through two or more channels. The strategy is to set up, synchronize and assess multiple platforms and channels through which retailers and their customers interact, with the aim to increase the value delivered by building stronger relationship and better shopping experience (Neslin et al., 2006).

The key drivers for transforming towards Multi-Channel Retailing are digitalization, changing consumer behavior and value delivered. Multi-Channel Retail offers convenience to customers through various digital and in-store channels, focused on enhancing the performance of each channel (Ailawadi & Farris, 2017). Fernie et al. (2015) noted that multichannel shoppers purchase more frequently and spend more dollars than single-channel shoppers. It has been observed that Multi-Channel Retail is gradually transforming into an Omni-Channel design wherein various channels and systems are completely integrated

to offer blended services, providing a seamless experience to customers (Yurova et al., 2017). This forms the basic theoretical background to explore about Omni-Channel Retailing.

1.2.2 The Dialectic Theory

Various studies have been carried out to understand the institutional changes taking place in the retail industry and retailing strategies. One of the well-known theories for retail institutional changes providing a foundation to study the changes happening in the Multi-Channel retail world and driving the objectives of this research is The Dialectic Theory conceptualized by Maronick.and Walker (1974) and later detailed by Oren (1989). According to the theory, retailers transform in response to competition, leading to an emergence of new retail business models. It was later concluded that within a broad retail category, there is always a conflict between the retailing of multiple forms, which leads to the convergence of forms towards the development of newer forms offering better characteristics.

Thus, new retail forms evolve through dialectic process of blending multiple forms. Multiple institutional forms with different advantages modify their forms till they develop a form that combines the advantages of all the forms. Retailers adopt strategies in the direction of that advantage and tend to upgrade or modify their offerings. Accordingly, this provides the theoretical background to explore the blended capabilities of Omni-Channel Retailing, which is an evolution from a combination of multiple forms of physical and online retailing. With retailers redefining their strategies towards the blended advantages of multiple channel retailing, this theory provides a solid background to examine the key capabilities driving towards Omni-Channel transformation of Organized Retailers in India.

1.2.3 Retail Customer Experience

Verhoef et al. (2009) conceptualized a comprehensive theoretical framework of retail customer experience as a multidimensional construct that

contains sum total of four components in the retail service context: cognitive, emotional, sensorial, and behavioral responses to the retail service. And that, it encompasses the total experience, including the search, purchase, consumption, and after-sale phases of the experience, and involve multiple retail channels. Also, in the Multi-Channel environment customers' experiences in one channel may be affected by their experiences in other channels. This specific theoretical approach was further elaborated to customer experience in the newer forms of retailing by Bagdare and Jain (2013) to incorporate Joy, Mood, Leisure, and Distinctive dimensions, providing a conceptual ground for identification of relevant components for this study.

As they conclude, Joy is expressed in terms satisfaction, pleasure, and engagement. Mood is expressed in terms of good, happy and exciting. Leisure in terms of relaxing, refreshing, and delightful. Lastly, the distinctive dimension is expressed in terms of uniqueness, memorable and wonderful aspects of customer experience. These were the theoretical or conceptual basis providing the necessary background to study the Omni-Channel Retail Experience related aspects effected due to the adoption of Omni-Channel Capabilities. Furthermore, Bagdare (2015) found that the emotional determinants of retail customer experience are grouped into nine factors ranging from staff, personalization, sensory appeal, store design, ambience, engagement, aesthetics, delight and window shopping appeal. These factors are managed by using carefully selected retail elements. Shopping in modern retail stores is essentially a sensory and emotional experience which attempts to engage, entertain and involve customers through their senses.

With increased competition from online players, traditional retailers are elevating the in-store experience into something more exciting and engaging to attract and retain customers, making shopping fun and entertaining (Poulsson & Kale, 2004). Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) described consumption experience as involving various leisurely activities, sensory pleasures, aesthetic enjoyment, and emotional responses, and that consumption may be viewed as a process that provides an individual with cognitive and sensory experiences. The emergence of

experience economy and experiential marketing have brought forth an experiential approach to retailing (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999; Verhoef et al., 2009).

Broadly speaking, experience is an interaction between a company and its customers, and is mostly influenced by the environment in which the interaction takes place. Retail experience can be enhanced by encouraging customer interaction and involvement in a multi-sensory environment (Spena et al., 2012). And, Retailers are exploring immersive technologies, to stimulate customers' visual, auditory, olfactory and tactile senses to energize the overall shopping experiences (Jones et al., 2010). Also, customer experience being realized through a combination of people, process and technology, it is the perceived quality of service by the customer which ultimately determines customer satisfaction. Thus, it is important to identify and measure the elements of customer experience, as they are critical to attract and retain customers (Meyer & Schwager, 2007).

Focusing on the key factors elevating Omni-Channel Retail Experience, a good customer service is fundamental to any business including retailing to prosper in the current competitive global market. It is about the capabilities of a retail organization and the abilities of its associates to respond to customers based on their unique needs in order to engage them meaningfully and provide a memorable customer experience (Reichheld, 2008). Poulsson and Kale (2004) define experience as a state produced in any individual in response to a stimulus, and that it has to be memorable. It is the subjective responses by consumers following their contact with a retailer. According to Schmitt (1999), experiences are triggered by specific stimuli and that they are not self-generated but induced. It occurs when a customer interacts with products, environment, personnel, policies, and practices of the retailer creating pleasurable outcomes.

Apart from focusing on customer experience as a construct, prior studies have also discussed on different stimuli through creation of appropriate retail environment influencing different components of customer experience. It has been observed that superior customer experience could be produced through deliberate placement of logical and affective signals in the shopping environment

(Berry & Carbone, 2007). Consequently, customer experience has been a critical component of the value creation process as there is a shift from product or brand focus to personalization of service (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Mascarenhas et al. (2006) reiterated customer experience as engaging, enduring and fulfilling aspects across the consumption chain. And, that these are the elements that encourage or inhibit consumers during their contact with a retailer (Berman & Evans, 1998; Terblanche & Boshoff, 2006).

1.3 Operational Definitions

Below are the definitions of some of the key terms used in this research:

1. **Retailing:** A process of selling consumer goods or services to customers to earn a profit. It is the activities involved in selling of goods to the end consumers for personal or household consumption (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).
2. **Retailer:** An organization or business or person that sells goods or services directly to consumers in relatively small quantities for consumption. A retailer is a company that buys products from a manufacturer or wholesaler and sells them to end users or customers. The term "retailer" is typically applied where a service provider fulfills small orders of a large number of individuals, who are end-users (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, n.d.; Wikipedia).
3. **Channel:** An interactive touch point or a medium through which customers connect with retailers, such as, store, website, mobile application, phone etc. (Neslin et al., 2006).
4. **Multi-Channel Retailing:** A retail strategy to sell products or services to consumers through two or more channels (Levy et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2010).
5. **Omni-Channel Retailing:** A retail strategy which integrates multiple channels providing a unified shopping experience to customers (Rigby, 2011; Verhoef et al., 2015).
6. **Omni-Channel Retail Experience:** A unified shopping journey across the physical and digital channels facilitated by retailers, to provide a seamless customer experience (Moravcikova & Kliestikova, 2017).

7. **Omni-Channel Retail Capabilities:** The processes, technologies and approach retailers need to employ to ultimately deliver the "total customer experience" that present-day shoppers have come to expect (Bardwell, 2013).
8. **Capability Dimensions:** Process areas or Enterprise capabilities of retailers structured by common characteristics, to represent the breadth of their features (Fraser et al., 2002).
9. **Retail Formats:** Classification of retailers into business models that best describe their retail operations. Standard formats in modern retail which emerged over the last century are Hypermarkets, Departmental Stores, Specialty Stores, Supermarkets, Convenience Stores, Discount Stores (Indiaretailing Bureau, 2014; Kumar, 2019).
10. **Organized Retailing:** Trading activities undertaken by licensed retailers who are registered for sales tax, income tax, etc. These include the privately owned, publicly traded and corporate-backed retail chains or businesses (Zia & Azam, 2013; Technavio, 2014).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the existing body of literature in order to gain a conceptual clarity about Omni-Channel Retailing and its adoption dynamics towards enhancing Omni-Channel Retail Experience. The literature has been categorized on the basis of their relevance into different classifications. These classifications adeptly dissect the subject matter to identify the information that could be used to evaluate the dynamics of Omni-Channel Retailing in India and globally, and the factors influencing the customer experience elements. Each literature belonging to these classifications is studied in detail to establish a firm knowledge base. Relevant articles, reports, conference proceedings and other documents through various electronic and non-electronic sources are meticulously chosen to develop a thorough understanding and establish a firm knowledge base. Correspondingly, research gaps are identified to facilitate further research on the topic.

2.1 Omni-Channel Retail Strategies and Underlying Constructs

Customers are increasingly using a combination of retail channels consisting of in-store as well as digital touchpoints. As Juaneda-Ayensa et al. (2016) explain, an Omni-Channel Strategy provides traditional retailers, a differentiated service through seamless shopping experience in the store leveraging a variety of digital channels. It also provides a competitive edge over pure play online retailers by leveraging their store assets and blending the shopping experience across channels through the adoption of various innovative in-store and digital technologies. Omni-Channel customers are looking forward to use retailer's touchpoints in all sorts of combinations of physical as well as digital frontages, such as mobile apps to compare prices, in-store digital tools like interactive catalog using a tablet etc.

On similar lines, Purcărea (2016) emphasizes that, with the growing competition from online retailers, traditional retailers are betting their futures on Omni-Channel Retailing. They are under severe pressure to identify the best solution, as they struggle to have the big picture of their Omni-Channel journey. They are finding ways to synchronize online and offline capabilities to provide a seamless customer experience through personalized engagement and timely recommendations. Omni-Channel Retailing has become an essential strategy and mapping the customer journey is the first step

towards this transformation. But, it is still unclear how a pure play online retailer and an ecommerce channel of an Omni-Channel Retailer would compete in the digital ecosystem.

Bezes (2013) had earlier emphasized that traditional retailers should synchronize the physical and digital worlds to provide shoppers with Multi-Channel experience that pure play online retailers simply cannot match. Enhanced product services for delivery and returns, such as, Buy Online Pickup In-store, Buy Instore Deliver to Home, Buy Online Ship from Store, Buy Online Return to Store etc. provide convenience to customer shopping through flexible fulfillment of products. In order to improve their brand image, Multi-Channel retailers should also ensure their positioning and all marketing messages with respect to their marketing mix, are consistent across online and offline channels, boosting their credibility and appeal to customers. Supporting this, Hortaçsu and Syverson (2015) later explained that the concurrent expansion and strength of online and offline formats indicate a future not dominated by either, but rather a substantial role for a combination of bricks and clicks. There exists a potential for a pervasive future for such a hybrid strategy with advanced features and services across channels providing a seamless experience to customers.

In a similar lieu, Singhi et al. (2016) insist that by 2020, it is expected that pure play online players would continue to grow and strengthen their business models with sophisticated features, but Retailers who are able to build strong capabilities towards adopting an Omni-Channel Experience Strategy would be in a better position to win than pure play online retailers. Whilst Omni-Channel Strategy is the macro trend today with some retailers already investing in expensive in-store technologies and infrastructure, however most Retailers are unclear on what opportunities exist and how to go about it. There could be some fungibility between in-store retailing and online retailing depending on how retailers evolve through their Omni-Channel service offerings.

These findings come together to support the work of Sinha et al. (2015) who researched extensively on the formidable combination of online retail with local convenience stores in India. They conclude that online retailers are planning to work in cooperation with local convenience stores to successfully adopt a combination strategy. It is suggested that both online and these convenience store formats can complement each

other and together deliver high value to consumers by co-existing. Such a synergistic model will not only complement their efforts but compensate for their weaknesses. While the stores provide convenience they are not large and do not carry mixed assortments. So, online retailers can pitch in to support them by providing a larger product range.

Herring et al. (2014) explore that some retailers are experimenting on leveraging their physical stores to offer Same Day Delivery and Pickup Services allowing customers to shop using their phones and receive their purchases on the same day, providing a new level of customer experience through optimized supply chain and fulfillment processes. They also found that items purchased online are being allowed to return at a physical store, by having customers conveniently drop-off the items directly at a store, providing a better experience on product returns through an optimized reverse logistics process in place.

On a similar note, Heller (2016) further elaborates that some stores play the role of Showroom, some serve as Distribution and Pick-up Centers and some stores as Multi-Channel hubs that connect offline and online experiences engaging customers and enhancing operations in the digital world. Some of the retailers are embracing an interactive experience through technologies such as digital kiosks within their physical stores to allow customers tailor their purchases and have them shipped to their home. Adopting these digital kiosks from within physical stores that connect to online stores are realized through a unified inventory visibility across channels. They offer endless aisles (wider selection of items unavailable at the store) to customers within the store, thereby increasing purchase conversions, by having them access online channel seamlessly.

As per a study by SD Retail Consulting (2013), many retailers have invested in capabilities like in-store pickup as a fulfillment option, mobile Point-of-Sale systems for customer convenience etc. But, majority of the retailers have not invested enough to effectively train and empower their store associates to handle the needs of Multi-Channel shoppers in the store. They are not compensating them with adequate incentives to recognize their contribution towards Cross-Channel services, thus lacking empowerment among customer service personnel. Retailers need to acknowledge the fact that stores may not be the initiators of sales always, but the store associates play a crucial role in driving the customer experience. In order to meet customers' expectations, Omni-Channel

Retailers need to also empower their associates and customer service personnel with hand-held technologies and devices to support the sales process, by recognizing the customers through a unified view of customer data across channels.

Hentschel (2016), later concluded that Retailers must engage their associates as well as customers in a highly relevant and personalized way across channels. Customer-facing associates are the front line of customer experience, so they need to be more sophisticated in how they interact with customers, by providing them insights on customers' historical transactions, preferences etc. Associates equipped with digital devices can pull-up product and customer information on their devices and guide a shopper exactly to that item in a store. And, such analytical capabilities can simplify and speed up the overall purchase process.

Picot-Coupey et al. (2016) examined the evolution of retail organizational decisions and processes in implementing an Omni-Channel strategy towards enriching retail shopping experience. They emphasize on dealing with key challenges with regards to organizational silos by appropriately restructuring the organization through centralized functions and integrated departments. Thus, establishing a collaborative mind-set with common Omni-Channel goals across the organization. They also echoed the importance of establishing a thorough governance structure with corporate level changes and representatives from all impacted areas of the organization, ensuring alignment across departments & channels.

In a similar vein, Mirsch et al. (2016) discuss that retailers need to adopt suitable organizational practices in order to enable a seamless and unique experience for their customers. And, as retailers progress towards Omni-Channel transformation, issues related to organizational integration, coordination and synergies across various functions need to be addressed, instigating an organizational redesign. They need to consider standardizing the retailing mix across channels, enabling the required synchronization. They also discussed about developing new methods of evaluation to bring in an encouraging governance model, through periodic review of functions, processes and policies across channels.

2.2 Omni-Channel Consumer Behavior and Underlying Constructs

Cook (2014) emphasizes that pure play online retailers are more successful in product categories such as books, music and video games, household and kitchen items etc. as they are able to attract customers seeking non-durable products. The key reason could be that the buying process for these products is not very tactile unlike categories like electronics products and they are relatively low-priced and frequently-purchased goods, characterized by routine or limited pre-purchase decision making. Moreover, customers do not buy them based on their looks or aesthetic feel unlike other products thus making them ideal for online retailing. The more expensive the product is, the more important would be the physical feel factor during decision making process.

Consequently, Juaneda-Ayensa et al. (2016) explain that consumers prefer buying durable products from Omni-Channel Retailers than pure play online retailers, as they also present a lower purchase risk enabling easy return of products at their physical stores. Hence, off late several pure play online retailers have been opening physical stores. They seek to capitalize on this consumer behavior to offer strong in-store and post-purchase experience to customers. Furthermore, Sharma and Joshi (2016) examined the Indian Retail market and ascertained that customers are constantly seeking a unified shopping experience to be able to conveniently move across devices. They also expect speed and efficiency in their purchase journey, and hence seek for consistent information, better quality and value assortments, shorter queues and an exciting as well as satisfying shopping environment. In order to cater to this changing consumer behavior, retailers are quickly evolving towards Multi-Channel and Omni-Channel Retailing. It is also leading them to reimagine the role of stores in the Omni-Channel world.

Cook (2014) further emphasized that customers tend to use their digital devices to locate a nearby store, check store hours, compare prices, search product information or read reviews. This poses one of the biggest challenges for retailers to deliver consistency of service and information across channels. And, this requires each channel to present consistent product assortment, prices and promotions. In addition, each channel needs to have intelligent insights on customers, to be aware of the experience that the customers have had to date through the other channels, such as, what they viewed, last page they visited or what was abandoned. This enables the buying experience to be seamless as

customers shift channels. This may need significant technology investment, procuring or integrating technology platforms, build data repositories and analytics engines and so on.

In one of the studies by SD Retail Consulting (2013), it was found that some of the largest retailers in US and UK are slow to adapt their store operations to changing consumer behavior. The speed of changes led by pure play online retailers is setting a high bar for Omni-Channel Retailers. Phibbs (2015) later asserted that Retailers should enable a 360° view of their customers by capturing every customer data that support deeper analysis of behavioral and purchases information, patterns and trends, thus enabling a personalized experience of customer journey. Lacking this visibility or the ability to synthesize customer data will mean missing new ways to engage and convert customers during their shopping journey. An Omni-Channel customer is mobile, highly connected and tech-savvy. Behaviorally, they demand a convenient and enjoyable shopping environment to make their purchases anytime anywhere, involving multiple devices.

Al-Khouri (2014) noted that the next level of retail transformation is built through deeper insights into customers' attributes and attitudes. As retailers seek to personalize products and services, customers have gradually started sharing their personal details such as social media information, preferences, likes and dislikes, personal events, contact details etc., enabling personalization of services across channels for a superior shopping experience. Retailers are also increasing the data collection points across all the channels, leading towards collection of huge amounts of data. However, as this trend progresses, the probability of data breach could also increase resulting in identity fraud and misuse of customer information.

Hence, retailers will have to endure an additional responsibility of maintaining security, anonymity and protecting the privacy of customer data. Besides, Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014) discussed the importance of balancing between personalization and privacy of customer data. On one hand, retailers are customizing their offerings to suit individual preferences by tracking customer behavior very closely. On the other hand, this could lead to breach of privacy due to overindulgence in personalized services. Also, there persists the issue of identifying the custodian of customer data and framing appropriate privacy protection policies in the organization.

2.3 Omni-Channel Retail Experience and Underlying Elements

As Richins (1997) explains, positive emotions play a major role in creating a pleasurable and memorable customer experience, influencing the perceptions of customers. Later, Pine and Gilmore (1998) described that customer experience consists of engaging and entertaining dimensions of the customer shopping journey. On similar lines, Jones et al. (2006) in one the studies on customer experience show that positive emotions are strongly associated with elevated Shopping experiences that result in positive feelings of customers. Thus, retail customer experience includes cognitive, emotional, sensorial and behavioral responses of customers towards retail shopping environment.

Accordingly, Bagdare and Jain (2013) further explored from prior studies that retail customer experiences can be broadly described through four dimensions – Joy, Mood, Leisure, and Distinctive. They observed that customers derive feelings of fun, enjoyment, pleasure, satisfying and engaging from their shopping experiences, and that joy related aspects are integral to the journey of the shopper. It was then observed that a retail environment significantly influences the shopping moods of customers by developing positive feelings, thereby making them feel good, happy and excited during shopping. It was also observed that shopping is considered to be a leisure activity which is associated with entertaining, refreshing, relaxing and delightful experiences. The retail environment acts as a stress buster in engaging, relaxing and refreshing shoppers by creating a leisurely feeling. And lastly, they found that the experiences which customers find to be unique and memorable are considered as distinctive in nature. And that, an experience could be perceived unique based on subjective evaluation of a retail environment by the customer. Thus, any capability that retailers build, including Multi-Channel and Omni-Channel Capabilities, primarily emphasize on elevating the retail experience aspects of their customers.

2.4 Indian Retail Industry and Specific Product Categories

The Indian Retail sector is highly fragmented and growing at 12% per annum with its estimated market size by 2020 expected to be at $1.3 Trillion. It has been ranked

as one of the top foreign investment destinations worldwide. Over 10% of India's GDP is contributed by retail sector and contributes about 8%.to the total employment. The organized retail market in India has a penetration of 10% of India's total retail sector and is growing exponentially due to growing consuming classes resulting from economic growth and is attracting the existing shoppers. The relative market share of organized retail in India is expected to rise to 24% by 2020, largely driven by Omni-Channel Retailing. And, the expected growth of organized retail is 25% while unorganized retail is 5%. Liberalization of FDI policies in retail is further accelerating the growth of organized retail in India, as global players make their entry into India. (Retailers Association of India, 2017; FICCI, 2016; Sharma & Joshi, 2016).

Majority of the studies in Multi-Channel and Omni-Channel Retailing have utilized non-durable products for comparison, though it is unclear whether these results can be generalized to all product categories. Since consumer behavior towards channel selection and price preference vary depending on the product category, with significant differences between durable and non-durable goods, it is necessary to recognize this critical factor (Chatterjee & Kumar, 2016). Moreover, consumers spending at organized retail stores is rising due to availability of brands, wider assortments, shopping environment, associate responsiveness, competitive pricing, convenience and many more attributes (Kumar, 2016).

Food and Grocery is the largest category within the entire retail sector with 60% share followed by Apparel, mainly attributed to large number of local grocery stores and street vendors for fruits and vegetables, and other co- operatives focusing on this category. On the other hand, Apparel and Fashion category is the biggest contributor of organized retailing in India. It has indeed been responsible for single handedly driving the retail sector in India. In 2012 it accounted for 33% of organized retail share followed by Food & Grocery and Mobile & telecom with each having 11% share. Market penetration in 2016 was highest for Apparel and Fashion category at 46%. Fashion retailing, which commands a large chunk of the organized retail business in India, has indeed been responsible for single handedly driving retail sector in India.

In fact, FDI policies in single-brand as well as multi-brand retail has made Grocery and Apparel as the two most favorable categories. Categories such as Consumer

Electronics is still in the nascent stage (Retailers Association of India, 2017; Singh, 2014; Deloitte, 2013). These facts clearly indicate that Apparel and Fashion category is a significant contributor of organized retailing in India. Moreover, India's population with large proportion of young, increasingly brand and fashion conscious segments will further strengthen this category. There is ample empirical evidence that Apparel consumers do consider the ability to touch and feel products in their decision of where to shop (Anderson et al., 2009). Interestingly, Pauwels and Neslin (2008) show that when an Apparel retailer that operated through Catalog and Internet opened physical stores, the latter cannibalized only Catalog but not Internet sales. This indicated that physical stores and Internet are likely to be the predominant channels for Multi-Channel Retailers.

2.5 Research Gap

Most of the research till date suggest that Omni-Channel is the future of retailing, and retailers are compelled towards this strategy to seamlessly integrate online and offline channels. But, the question on how retailers should strategize to build the integrated capabilities in order to enhance Omni-Channel Retail Experience remains unclear. The studies have mostly focused on the gap between online and offline channels or have only studied specific cases (Heller, 2015; Hansen & Sia, 2015; Kernaghan, 2013), thereby not providing a holistic view of Omni-Channel Capabilities (Trenz, 2015; Sinha et al., 2015).

Though the studies have been able to bring out some key knowledge in terms of the importance of integrating online and instore experiences and conceptual theory of Omni-Channel Retailing in particular, there was no clarity as to how this can be achieved. Moreover, although it was emphasized that most of the capabilities that retailers are building or planning to build in general contribute towards boosting customer experience, there was no view on the most essential factors (capabilities) that retailers should focus towards enhancing Omni-Channel Retail Experience. Hence, there was a need to examine the view of retailers particularly in India towards key capabilities and dimensions that retailers need to focus and prioritize in the near term to elevate Omni-Channel Retail Experience, as it would be challenging to implement all the capabilities at one go.

While the studies suggest that Omni-Channel Retailing is a strategy mostly adopted by brick-and-mortar retailers in order to sustain the competition from pure play online retailers, we also observe a trend of pure play online retailers opening physical stores to get Omni-Channel ready. These counter trends are bound to create a level playing field eventually leading all retailers to be Omni-Channel players competing to provide the best customer experience. And, so there lies a challenge on the path to attain a desired state on this journey, and needs suggestive guidelines for retailers on how to get there. The research takes these critical aspects into consideration to study the phenomena. It examined by first ascertaining the capabilities and capability dimensions that are essential for retailers in India to elevate Omni-Channel Retail Experience, and consequently suggest a plausible approach by building a Capability Priority Framework, as a solution towards this transformation.

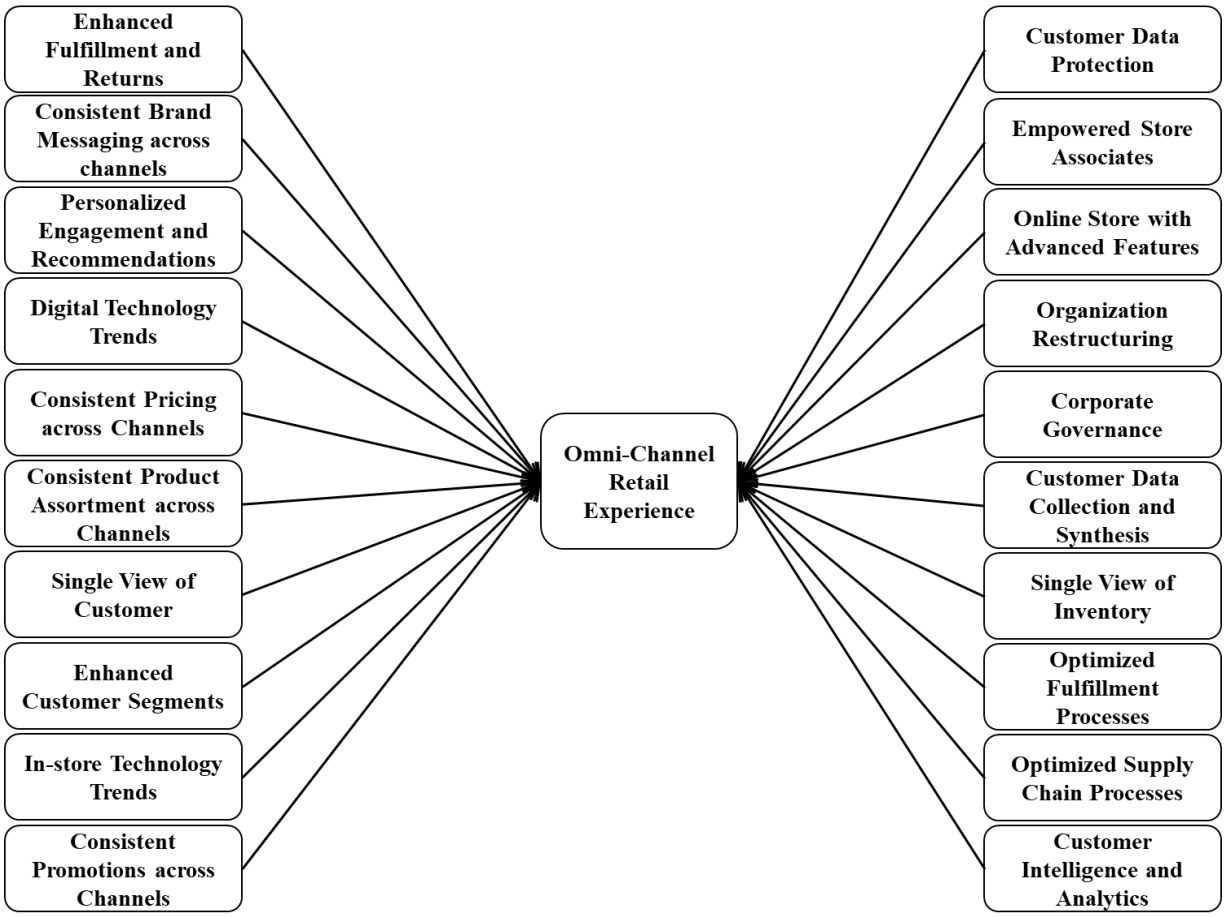
Examining literature related to the state of Retail industry in India and multiple product categories, Retail Industry in India is enduring a major thrust in growth and retailers are considering various strategies including Multi-Channel or Omni-Channel in order to create a sustainable competitive advantage. Among the product categories, Apparel and Fashion has been the biggest contributor of organized retailing in India and demonstrates a great potential towards adopting Omni-Channel strategy. Hence, this research narrows down to studying Omni-Channel Capabilities with regards to Organized Retailers in India specifically focused on Apparel and Fashion category, in order to suggest them a suitable approach.

By and large, while customers are expecting retailers to serve their shopping needs and preferences every time everywhere, the seamless experience of a true Omni-Channel is still not quite evident and how close are the Retailers to meet that expectation is unclear. Moreover, many retailers have reached a false state of Omni-Channel who must abolish siloed channel strategies altogether.

2.6 Initial Conceptual Framework

As examined through prior literature and supported by the theoretical background, an initial conceptual framework of Omni-Channel Constructs influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience was recognized. As consumer expectations for Omni-Channel

experience intensify, and retailers' organizational, technical, and operational barriers remain hard to overcome, it is important for retailers to elevate Omni-Channel Retail Experience by building key capabilities around these constructs. The initial conceptual framework is as shown in figure 1 below.



Source: Developed by the Author

Figure 1. Initial Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was further examined again after ascertaining the constructs through Qualitative Study, subsequent validation procedures and a Pilot Study detailed later in the document.

2.7 Research Questions

Based on the research gap identified, below were the impending questions that further led to this research study:

1. What are the various Omni-Channel Constructs (Capability Dimensions) influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience with respect to Organized Retailers?
2. What are the most critical Capability Dimensions and Omni-Channel Capabilities that Apparel & Fashion Retailers in India should emphasize in order to elevate Omni-Channel Retail Experience?

2.8 Research Objectives

In order to empirically answer the research questions identified, below were the specific objectives formulated for this research:

1. To identify the Omni-Channel Constructs (Capability Dimensions) and Capabilities influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience for Organized Retailers.
2. To ascertain the Capability Dimensions and Omni-Channel Capabilities influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience specific to Apparel and Fashion retailers in India.
3. To derive the most critical Dimensions and Capabilities influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience specific to Apparel and Fashion retailers in India.
4. To determine a plausible approach for Apparel and Fashion retailers in terms of key Capabilities and Dimensions towards elevating Omni-Channel Retail Experience.

2.9 Variables Identified

The Omni-Channel Constructs or Capability Dimensions denoting a preliminary list of independent variables were identified from extensive review of literature, providing a foundation for further investigation of their influence on the dependent variable Omni-Channel Retail Experience, using a mixed methods approach. The constructs which appeared in at least five or more citations of the literature reviewed

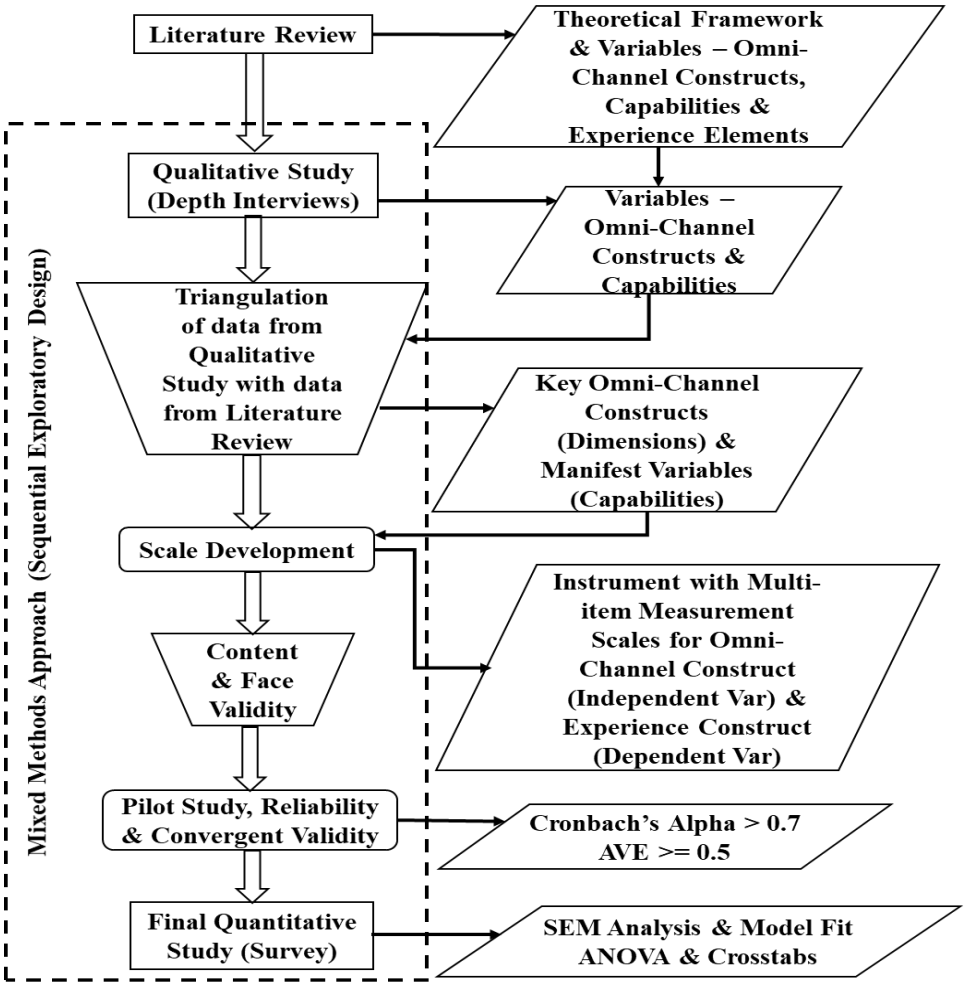
were considered for the study. Accordingly, about twenty constructs were identified as listed in table 1 below.

Table 1. Omni-Channel Constructs Identified from Literature

Sl. No.	Omni-Channel Construct	No. of Citations
1	Enhanced Fulfillment and Return Options	18
2	Consistent Brand Messaging across channels	16
3	Personalized Customer Engagement and Recommendations	11
4	Digital Technology Trends	11
5	Consistent Pricing across Channels	10
6	Consistent Product Assortment across Channels	9
7	Single View of Customer	9
8	Enhanced Customer Segments leveraging CRM, Loyalty and Rewards Program	8
9	In-store Technology Trends	8
10	Consistent Promotions across Channels	7
11	Customer Data Protection and Privacy Management	7
12	Empowered Store Associates and Customer Service staff	7
13	Stores with Advanced Features	7
14	Organization Restructuring	7
15	Corporate Governance	7
16	Customer Data Collection and Synthesis	6
17	Single View of Inventory	6
18	Optimized Fulfillment Processes	6
19	Optimized Supply Chain Processes	6
20	Customer Intelligence and Analytics	5

3. METHODOLOGY

This section describes the research design and methods used in this study to execute a systematic investigation to establish necessary facts and reach a conclusion. A Mixed Methods approach adopting a methodological triangulation of both Qualitative & Quantitative research methods (Creswell, 2013) was followed to ascertain the key Omni-Channel Constructs and Capabilities, and their influence on Omni-Channel Retail Experience. This approach allows to systematically study for a broader and deeper understanding of the phenomenon, adding rigor to the research. A flowchart with step-by-step procedure, establishing a methods map (Research Process) that summarizes the methodology followed in this research is as illustrated in figure 2 below.


Literature Review
Theoretical Framework & Variables – Omni-Channel Constructs, Capabilities & Experience Elements
Qualitative Study (Depth Interviews)
Variables – Omni-Channel Constructs & Capabilities
Triangulation of data from Qualitative Study with data from Literature Review
Key Omni-Channel Constructs (Dimensions) & Manifest Variables (Capabilities)
Scale Development
Instrument with Multi-item Measurement Scales for Omni-Channel Construct (Independent Var) & Experience Construct (Dependent Var)
Content & Face Validity
Pilot Study, Reliability & Convergent Validity
Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7
AVE >= 0.5
Final Quantitative Study (Survey)
SEM Analysis & Model Fit
ANOVA & Crosstabs
Mixed Methods Approach (Sequential Exploratory Design)

Source: Developed by the Author

Figure 2. Research Methodology Flowchart

An extensive review of prior literature followed by Qualitative study through In-depth expert interviews of retail executives ensured theory driven as well as practitioner based knowledge capture of Omni-Channel Constructs (Dimensions) and individual Capabilities. Subsequently, complemented by a Quantitative study through structured questionnaire based survey, affirmed the critical Omni-Channel Capabilities & Dimensions influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience. While the Qualitative Study will be detailed in this section, the Quantitative Study part will be explained in the Analysis section involving appropriate statistical techniques.

3.1 Research Design

The research employed a Mixed Methods approach adopting a Sequential Exploratory Design, which includes an initial stage of Qualitative Study followed by a subsequent stage of Quantitative Study (Creswell, 2013), in order to ascertain the key capabilities elevating Omni-Channel Retail Experience of Apparel and Fashion Retailers in India. This design was appropriate for the research as Omni-Channel Retailing is at a nascent stage in India and it is the most suitable design when a study deals with an emerging phenomenon whose research has been limited, enabling to fully understand the intricacies of the research problem and build direct knowledge (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Moreover, combining multiple methods help overcome intrinsic biases of single-method studies (Jakob, 2001).

The initial Qualitative study was conducted through In-depth expert interviews of retail executives. In-depth interviews are mostly used to study lesser known topics where it is important to gain an in-depth understanding. It is the preferred qualitative method for studies related to marketing with about 60% of them having utilized this tool (Petrescu & Lauer, 2017). It mostly employs open-ended questions to elicit a detailed understanding of specific subject matters (Dahl & Moreau, 2007; Ellen et al., 2006). It was intended to find the views on trends, developments and focus areas with regards to Omni-Channel Retail as well as evolving forms of Multi-Channel interactions, in order to explore the list of Omni-Channel constructs (Hosseini et al., 2017; Joseph, 2015). It was used as an exploratory tool of the Sequential Research Design, to find relevant constructs in

developing a scale for subsequent quantitative study (Merton et al., 1990). The constructs captured from Qualitative interviews was triangulated with the ones identified from literature review, to ensure stability, uniformity and content validity of the variables that emerged.

Retailers listed in the Retail Industry Report by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) formed the sampling frame for the Qualitative study. IBEF is a trust established by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India as part of the 'Make in India' initiative. It lists the competitive landscape of top retailers leading the Indian retail market and will be a reliable source for the qualitative study. The respondents were senior managers or executives chosen through Purposive Sampling across retailers from the sampling frame. In-depth interviews conducted for marketing related research generally cover about 20 to 30 interviews of experts focused on a specific topic (Griffin & Hauser, 1993). Interviewing experts is a common and adequate method, as their knowledge on emerging phenomena provides insights into industries and their strategies, and more suitable for deriving information on emerging areas and their constructs (Creswell, 2009).

Moreover, applying the Principle of Theoretical Saturation (until subsequent samples produce no new information) has been the criterion to determine purposive samples in most researches, especially dealing with large or unknown population and emerging or complex topics (Guest et al., 2006). Accordingly, about 24 experts were interviewed until theoretical saturation. The experts were selected as knowledge agents having substantial experience in retail domain and awareness on Multi-Channel or Omni-Channel Retailing (Malhotra & Dash, 2011; Jadhav & Khanna, 2016), and each interview lasted for about 45 minutes. The expert respondents were assured about the confidentiality and anonymity of responses through prior declaration, and were allowed to quit at any point during the interview process at their discretion.

The subsequent quantitative study was conducted through a structured questionnaire based survey of retail executives from Apparel and Fashion Retailers in India. The questionnaire instrument was developed incorporating quantitative measurement scales for the Omni-Channel constructs triangulated in the previous step. A 5-point Unipolar Likert Scale was designed for the identified measurement variables,

enabling statistical analysis of responses. Unipolar scales will be appropriate for the research as it measures the actual magnitude or strength of identified variables, as there will be no negative point or true neutral point on the scale (Dillman et al., 2009). As per earlier studies (Fink, 1995; Dawes, 2012; Dillman et al., 2009), a 5-point Likert Scale aptly balances between enough response options (< 5 options measure only direction rather than strength of opinion) and making it easier to respond (not everyone will have clarity between all the points with more than 5 options).

In fact, higher scales tend to induce cognitive overloading, lower response rate, and acquiescence bias and are time consuming. Moreover, 5-point Scales are best suited for unipolar measurements as only one construct is measured at a given point to determine its strength (Krosnick & Berent, 1993). The survey instrument was tested for reliability and internal consistency by computing Cronbach's Alpha to confirm if it is in the acceptable range. The instrument was also validated by seeking inputs from retail domain experts as well as academicians to ensure content validity and face validity of the instrument developed before administering to the sample respondents (Litwin, 1995).

This research uses an approach developed by Cochran (1977) to determine an adequate size of a representative sample that supports in generalizing the findings for a large or unknown population. According to this approach, the sample size is determined based on a desired Precision Level (e = Margin of Error), Confidence Level (Z value from table) and Variability in the Population (p = Proportion of the Attribute). It is determined using the formula, Sample Size (n_0) = (Z^2 x p x q) / e^2. As the Organized Retail executives' population in India is fairly large for practical considerations and its degree of variability is unknown, the required sample size is calculated assuming the maximum level of variability (p = 0.5 or 50%) and taking 95% confidence level (Z = 1.96) with $\pm$5% precision (e = 0.05).

Thus, the sample size computed with these assumptions for the quantitative study was 384, which is an approximation of the population of executives from Apparel and Fashion retailers in India. This sample size also adheres to the general thumb rule suggesting a minimum of five times the number of variables allowing it to be analyzed using various statistical techniques (Hair et al., 2006; Boateng et al., 2018). As the final

instrument contained about 51 items in total, the sample size computed would be large enough for applying necessary statistical analysis procedures.

The quantitative study involves obtaining responses from a sample of the population of executives belonging to Apparel and Fashion retailers in India. But, this population of executives will be large, scattered and there does not exist an exhaustive list of executives compiled from any source. Hence, Multistage Sampling was found to be the appropriate sampling procedure to obtain a representative sample of this population, as it involves selecting respondents from various Apparel and Fashion retailers in India (Agresti & Finlay, 2008). To start with, a sampling frame was created by studying a report on Apparel Retailers in India from Euromonitor (2019), to extract the list of Apparel and Fashion retailers. Euromonitor International is a leading provider of market research solutions for products and services worldwide, which is one of the highly sought and most reliable sources of information for strategy and research purposes.

A numbered list of retailers extracted from the report formed the sampling frame. In the first stage of sampling, a simple random sample of about thirty Apparel and Fashion retailers (primary sampling units) were selected from the sampling frame (Singh & Mangat, 1996) using a random number generator. In the second stage of sampling, all the respondents from each of these retailers having substantial experience (Malhotra & Dash, 2011) in Multi-Channel retailing (final sampling units) were selected i.e., the samples were selected with probability 1. These respondents were then administered with the questionnaires for seeking the necessary quantitative responses. Accordingly, keeping the response rate in mind, about 450 executives were drawn to participate in the quantitative survey. Valid responses with no missing data or outliers were received from a total of 403 respondents, which formed the data set for a detailed quantitative analysis.

3.2 Qualitative Study

The study was conducted through semi-structured In-depth interviews with open ended questions capturing inputs from experts (Petrescu & Lauer, 2017), with regards to Omni-Channel Retailing in India. The interviews were steered using a guideline of questions ensuring the flow of responses through a guided flow of thoughts. The interview guide had questions grouped into two sections as described below:

1) General Information: This section captured responses to demographically oriented questions to collect nominal information about the name of the retail organization, its holding company, its annual revenue and store format. It also collected respondents' experience in retail industry domain and their designation in the organization.

2) Expert Opinion on Omni-Channel Retailing in India: In this section, the executives were asked eight open-ended questions to share their expert inputs with regards to various aspects on Omni-Channel Retailing in India and their opinion on essential Omni-Channel Capabilities. All the respondents were interviewed using these questions in the same sequence. They were also probed further inductively on key responses as required.

About 24 executives were interviewed through purposive sampling until theoretical saturation (Griffin & Hauser, 1993; Guest et al., 2006), based on their experience in Retail domain and awareness on Multi-Channel or Omni-Channel Retailing (Dahl & Moreau, 2007; Malhotra & Dash, 2011). The average experience of the respondents was over 15 years in retail industry domain, who had designations such as Director, General Manager, Divisional Manager, Department Manager, Store Manager, Area Manager, Regional Manager, Operations Manager and Senior Executive.

About 54% of the respondents were from Single Brand retail (such as Pantaloons), while 46% were from Multi Brand retail (such as Shoppers Stop), as illustrated in figure 3. The respondents were spread across typical retail formats with 54% from Specialty Stores (such as Westside), 29% from Hypermarkets (such as Big Bazaar) and 17% from Department Stores (such as Lifestyle), as illustrated in figure 4. The spread of respondents based on their roles or designations in the retail organization is illustrated in figure 5.

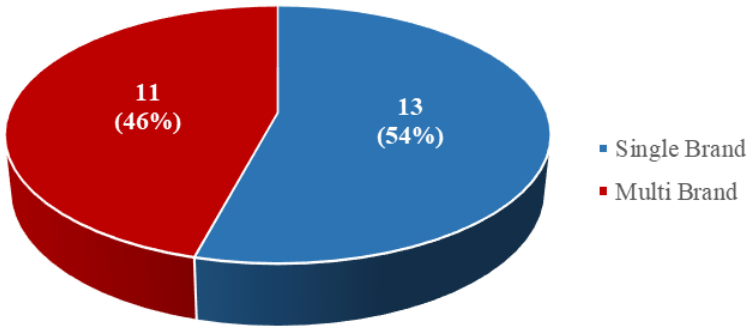


Figure 3. Respondents by No. of Brands

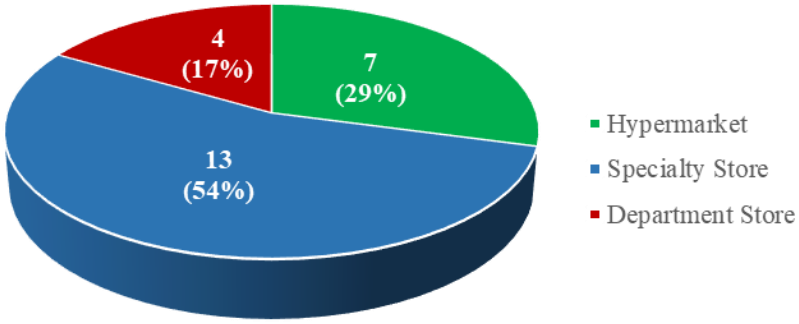


Figure 4. Respondents by Retail Format

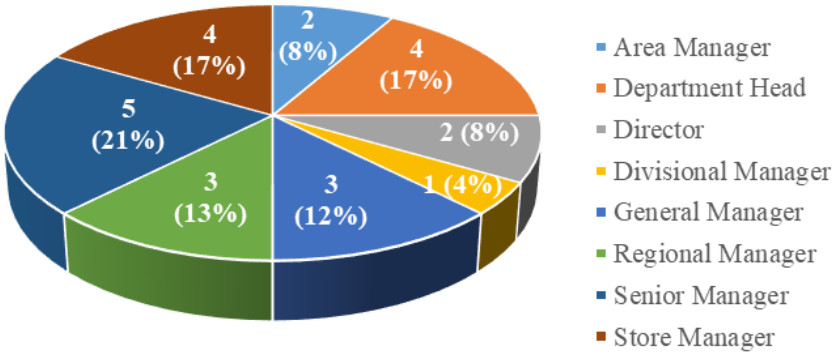


Figure 5. Respondents by Designation

Qualitative responses generated from In-depth interviews were analyzed by first transcribing the raw data from interview notes of each of the respondent cases into transcripts of Microsoft Word documents. Then systematically coding the data using appropriate codes, by identifying, organizing & labeling statements from embedded in transcripts, demonstrating Omni-Channel Retail Capabilities. The codes were short descriptions created for these statements to precisely denote the capabilities. (Creswell, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The textual data generated from interview transcripts was analyzed using QDA Miner qualitative analysis software for frequency of occurrence of these codes.

The focus of the analysis was on frequency distribution of recurring ideas to identify frequently used phrases as indicators of wider themes relating to the codes (Bryman & Burgess, 1994). The analysis involved observing the number of respondent cases where each of the codes occurred as well as the number of times they recur within each case. Applying these criteria, the study extracted about twenty top codes denoting a list of key Omni-Channel Constructs (Dimensions), based on frequency analysis of the most number of cases where each of the codes occurred. These top twenty codes were extracted such that, in the frequency distribution they occurred in more than five cases of the total 24 respondent cases i.e., 25% or higher number of total respondent cases. The codes extracted were as listed in table 2 below, denoting the list of constructs to be examined further.

Table 2. Omni-Channel Constructs Extracted from Qualitative Study

Sl. No.	Code Representing Omni-Channel Constructs	No. of Times Occurred	No. of Cases Occurred	% Cases Occurred
1	Digital Technology Adoption	24	15	62.5%
2	Customer Intelligence across Channels	23	15	62.5%
3	Personalized Content and Recommendations	19	15	62.5%
4	Unified Organization Structure	16	15	62.5%
5	Optimized Supply Chain and Fulfillment Processes	16	13	54.2%

6	Change Management and Corporate Governance	16	13	54.2%
7	Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns	15	13	54.2%
8	Single View of Inventory	15	13	54.2%
9	Expedited Delivery Options	13	11	45.8%
10	Single View of Order	12	11	45.8%
11	Empowered Customer Facing Associates	12	11	45.8%
12	In-store Technology Adoption	14	10	41.7%
13	Consistent Brand Messaging across Channels	12	10	41.7%
14	Stores with Sophisticated Features	11	10	41.7%
15	Customer Data Collection and Synthesis across Channels	11	9	37.5%
16	Customer Data Protection and Privacy Management	11	9	37.5%
17	Accurate Demand Forecast and Real-time Inventory Availability	10	9	37.5%
18	End to End Supply Chain Visibility	8	7	29.2%
19	Trade-off Between Existing and Emerging Technology Investments	7	7	29.2%
20	Development of Integrated Enterprise Systems	6	6	25%

Several factors pertaining to Omni-Channel Retail capabilities were extracted from the statements of interview responses to open ended questions. Some of the key factors or capabilities mapped to corresponding Omni-Channel Constructs picked from the transcripts are detailed below.

Construct 1: Digital Technology Adoption

- Features such as Product Availability information, Store Locator, Shipment Tracker, e-Coupons, Chatbots etc.

- Digital Loyalty Card through mobile application to manage rewards and offers.
- Marketing Campaigns through social media platforms.

Construct 2: Customer Intelligence across Channels

- Predicting customer behaviour across channels by identifying purchase patterns.
- Sentiment analysis of social media messages to understand customers better.
- Real-time decisions through Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

Construct 3: Personalized Content and Recommendations

- Customized offers and product recommendation based on purchase history and individual preferences.
- Context aware personalization generating offers based on events or situations.
- Location based offers when customers are in the vicinity.

Construct 4: Unified Organization Structure

- Breaking down organizational silos by collaborating across departments (or functions) to support each other.
- Collaboration between IT and other business functions.
- Centralized Marketing and Sales functions.
- Coordination between Online and Offline operations.
- Centralized Operations to fulfil customer orders through any channel.

Construct 5: Optimized Supply Chain and Fulfilment Processes

- Automated Order, Inventory and Warehouse Management processes, enhancing inventory allocation decisions and accurate shipment tracking (on-hand & in-transit).

- Integrated Supplier Collaboration and Fulfilment systems aiding visibility across suppliers for timely replenishment.
- Enhanced processes to consolidate or split shipments to optimize order deliveries.

Construct 6: Change Management and Corporate Governance

- Cross functional Steering Committee driving Omni-Channel mission in the right direction.
- Change Management program for early awareness and wider acceptance of transition with least disruption.
- Governance Model to continuously track performance of Cross-Channel processes.
- IT Department governed as a horizontal function across the organization.

Construct 7: Cross-Channel Fulfilment and Returns

- Customers ordering products online can collect them from a nearest store.
- Transfer-in stock from an alternate store when unavailable to collect at the chosen store.
- Allow customers ordering products online to be able to get it delivered to their preferred location
- Enable processes to ship products from a nearest store (for certain product categories) instead of a faraway warehouse
- Customers purchasing products online can return them at a nearest store.
- Customers can initiate return request online or call customer support to schedule a return pick-up or drop off directly at a nearest store.

Construct 8: Single View of Inventory

- Centralized inventory data ensuring visibility of stock information to key stakeholders.

Construct 9: Expedited Delivery Options

- Processes to ship products within few hours or same day or on a selected date to preferred location of the customer.
- Quick Lanes and Mobile Point-of-Sale for faster checkout in stores.

Construct 10: Single View of Order

- Centralized Order Management platform enabling real-time visibility of orders.

Construct 11: Empowered Customer Facing Associates

- Special incentive or bonus scheme for Cross-Channel responsibilities.
- Specific training on cross-channel responsibilities.
- Equip associates with insights on products and customers through handheld devices.
- Associates enabled with digital competence like Mobile Point-of-Sale and other digital applications to manage checkouts, product returns, schedule deliveries etc.

Construct 12: In-store Technology Adoption

- Virtual Trial Room or Interactive Mirror for customers to make right choices quickly.
- Self-service Kiosks to search or customize products unavailable at the store.
- Beacons tracking customer movement in the store.
- Contactless Payment through Digital Wallets.
- Digital Signage and Interactive Advertising displaying dynamic content on screens.

Construct 13: Consistent Brand Messaging across Channels

- Congruency in brand positioning characteristics such as, Logos, Pictures, Colours, Fonts etc. across all touch points, conveying a unified brand experience.

- Uniformity in services provided across channels holding a strong brand promise.

Construct 14: Stores with Sophisticated Features

- Generating Return Slips online to initiate product returns.
- Request for Gift Wrapping, Comparing Prices, Generating Digital Coupons.
- Competitive Price-matching.
- Real-time stock availability of products.
- Real-time shipment status updates.

Construct 15: Customer Data Collection and Synthesis across Channels

- Systematically aggregating and blending data from multiple channels and applications.
- Quality profiling of data for accuracy and completeness.

Construct 16: Customer Data Protection and Privacy Management

- Fraud protection of data passing through various systems preventing data breach.
- Confidentiality of data across platforms preventing intrusion into personal space.
- Custodian within the organization for huge amounts of data that get generated.

Construct 17: Accurate Demand Forecast and Real-time Inventory Availability

- Forecasting sales for all the channels to minimize Cross-Channel inventory conflicts.
- Availability of stock shared between channels to manage inventory allocation processes catering to Cross-Channel orders.

Construct 18: End to End Supply Chain Visibility

- Integrated supply chain processes providing visibility into every movement of product.
- End to end view of Logistics, Transportation, Distribution and Warehousing processes to all stakeholders.
- Supplier Portal and automated Supplier Collaboration processes to have the suppliers work in real-time ensuring product availability.

Construct 19: Trade-off between Existing and Emerging Technology Investments

- Evaluate between legacy implementations & emerging technologies for compliance of data flowing from new channels
- Check the viability using low cost cloud based platforms before making large scale Omni-Channel investments

Construct 20: Development of Integrated Enterprise Systems

- Develop integrated Enterprise Applications & Decision Support Systems that incorporate fulfilment optimization algorithms based on predefined business rules

Thus the Qualitative Study indicates that, proliferation of digital devices and applications is encouraging the necessity for Omni-Channel Retailing, leading to the fusion of online and offline platforms. Likewise, technology innovations are further facilitating retailers to focus on Omni-Channel strategy designed to revolve around customer centric features and processes. The Qualitative Study extracted a detailed view on the key Omni-Channel Constructs and Capabilities that are essential for retailers in India to progress in the Omni-Channel Retail journey. It identified the factors having a strong emphasis on customer engagement aspects to deliver an elevated shopping experience, as retailers embark on the Omni-Channel journey. The twenty constructs extracted were further examined to ascertain the most crucial ones, as explained in the next sub-section.

3.3 Ascertaining Variables and Measurement Scales

The constructs extracted from the Qualitative study were triangulated with the ones identified from literature review to ensure uniformity of the variables that emerged and identify the most crucial ones from the context of Indian retail market for subsequent Quantitative study. In order to effectively triangulate the data, the most common constructs between the two lists were first identified to ensure the important constructs are captured based on their recurrence in both prior literature and Qualitative responses of experts. Then, from these common constructs the ones having the highest frequency of occurrence and essentially grounded in the literature were extracted. As a result, about ten predominant constructs that are imperative for retailers in India were identified in this step, representing the independent variables for further quantitative study. The key constructs or independent variables identified are as listed in table 3 below:

Table 3. Key Omni-Channel Constructs (Independent Variables) Triangulated

Sl. No.	Construct / Independent Variable
1	Digital Technology Trends
2	Personalized Customer Engagement & Recommendations
3	Unified Organization Structure
4	Change Management and Corporate Governance
5	In-store Technology Trends
6	Consistent Brand Messaging across Channels
7	Empowered Store Associates & Customer Service staff
8	Stores with Sophisticated Features
9	Customer Data Protection & Privacy Management
10	Enhanced Delivery & Return Options

A standard scale development procedure (Carpenter, 2018; Colwell et al., 2008) was followed to build a measuring instrument for the quantitative part of this mixed methods research. An initial list of measurement scale items (Manifest Variables) for

each construct were identified from prior literature, to be adapted in this research. About 53 items were identified in total in the initial list. The key constructs derived were mapped appropriately to the identified multi-item measurement scales (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1989). The constructs (independent variables) and corresponding multi-item measurement scales are as listed in table 4 below.

Table 4. Key Omni-Channel Constructs and Multi-Item Measurement Scales

Sl. No.	Construct	Multi-Item Measurement Scale	Supporting Literature
1	Digital Technology Trends	1. Digital coupons through mobile applications 2. Digital loyalty cards through mobile applications 3. Marketing campaigns through Social media platforms 4. Virtual Trial Room for online channels 5. Responsive Ads that automatically adjust to fit available ad space through Ad network platforms	Lazaris et al. (2015); Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014); Joseph (2015); Gao and Su (2016); Picot-Coupey et al. (2016); Chatterjee and Kumar (2016)
2	Personalized Customer Engagement & Recommendations	6. Customized Offers based on purchase patterns and individual preferences 7. Customized Offers driven by individual contextual data (events or situations) 8. Product or assortment recommendation relevant to the customer 9. Customized online shopping environment	Lazaris et al. (2015); Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014); Joseph (2015); Mirsch et al. (2016); Al-Khouri (2014); Goersch (2002)

3	Unified Organization Structure	10. Synchronized back office systems and processes 11. Collaboration across departments (or functions) through integrated business model 12. Coordination between online and offline operations 13. Collaboration between IT and other business functions 14. Centralized marketing and sales functions	Picot-Coupey et al. (2016); Mirsch et al. (2016); Mu¨ ller-Lankenau et al. (2006); Cummins et al. (2016)
4	Change Management and Corporate Governance	15. IT department governed as a horizontal function across the organization 16. Governance model tracking performance of cross-channel processes	Grove and Bickers (2011); Strang (2013); Mu¨ ller-Lankenau et al. (2006)
5	In-store Technology Trends	17. Self-service kiosks providing online access from stores 18. Virtual Trial Room or Interactive Mirror in the store 19. Digital signage displaying dynamic content on screens in the store 20. Interactive advertising platform in the store 21. Contactless payments through mobile Wallets 22. Beacons tracking customer movement in the store	Lazaris et al. (2015); Cummins et al. (2016); Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014); Burke (2002); Wurmser (2014); Picot-Coupey et al. (2016); Gao and Su (2016); Chatterjee and Kumar (2016); Verhoef et al. (2015)

6	Consistent Brand Messaging across Channels	23. Uniformity in prices displayed across all channels 24. Uniformity in standard offers across all channels 25. Uniformity in value proposition across all touch points 26. Uniformity in customer services provided across channels 27. Congruency in font for text displayed across all touch points 28. Congruency in logo or picture displayed across all touch points 29. Congruency in colors used across all touch points	Carlson et al. (2015); Joseph (2015); Cook (2014); Picot-Coupey et al. (2016); Mirsch et al. (2016); Goersch (2002); Lazaris and Vrechopoulos (2014)
7	Empowered Store Associates & Customer Service staff	30. Special incentive or bonus scheme for cross-channel responsibilities 31. Specific training on cross-channel responsibilities 32. Equipped with technologies and devices for insights on products, customers and purchases data	Picot-Coupey et al. (2016); Cummins et al. (2016); Purcarea (2016); Gao and Su (2016); Mu¨ ller-Lankenau et al. (2006); Lazaris and Vrechopoulos (2014); Cook (2014); Batrinca and Treleaven (2014)
8	Stores with Sophisticated Features	33. Locate nearby stores and their information 34. Compare prices of similar products 35. Visibility into reviews and ratings on products 36. Competitive price-matching	Bedgood (2016); Herhausen et al (2015); Lazaris et al. (2015); Joseph (2015)

		37. Faster checkout through mobile Point-of-Sale 38. Real-time stock availability of products 39. Real-time shipment status updates	
9	Customer Data Protection & Privacy Management	40. Data Warehousing that systematically aggregates and blends customer data from multiple channels 41. Fraud protection of customer data passing through various systems 42. Confidentiality of customer information stored on various platforms 43. Custodian within the organization for owning, controlling and sharing customer data	Zhang et al. (2010); Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014)
10	Enhanced Delivery & Return Options	44. Order products online and collect them at a nearest store 45. Return products purchased online to a nearest store 46. Order products online to be delivered to a preferred location 47. Ship products from a nearest store when warehouse is farther 48. Deliver products within few hours or same day or on a selected date to the preferred location	Picot-Coupey et al. (2016); Lazaris et al. (2015); Gao and Su (2016); Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014)

Similarly, a list of measurement scale items (Manifest Variables) for the dependent variable Omni-Channel Retail Experience were identified from prior literature,

to be adapted in this research. All the 12 items that emerged in the literature were identified for the initial list. The identified multi-item measurement scales are as listed in table 5 below.

Table 5. Omni-Channel Retail Experience Construct and Multi-Item Measurement Scale

Sl. No.	Construct	Multi-Item Measurement Scale	Source
1	Omni-Channel Retail Experience	1. Create a refreshing shopping environment for customers 2. Create a relaxing shopping environment for customers 3. Create a delightful shopping environment for customers 4. Make shopping to be a pleasurable journey to customers 5. Make shopping satisfying to customers 6. Create an engaging shopping environment for customers 7. Provide a unique shopping experience 8. Provide a memorable shopping experience 9. Provide a wonderful shopping experience 10. Lift a good mood in customers 11. Boost happiness in customers 12. Boost excitement in customers	Bagdare and Jain (2013)

All the 60 measurement items identified were adapted as meaningful questions in designing a questionnaire to measure the respective constructs. The questionnaire was designed with 5-point Unipolar Likert Scales to capture the responses of executives from

Apparel and Fashion retailers for each of the questions. A 5-point Likert Scale is a proven scale to create enough variances required for examining relationships and internal consistency using reliability estimates of measuring instruments (Lissitz & Green, 1975). Likert Scales are also considered as a grouped form of continuous scales treating the variables as if they were continuous for statistical analysis (Easterby-Smith et al., 2009).

The Likert responses designed for independent variables seek to gain a deeper understanding on how strongly respondents feel on a scale of 1(Not a Priority) to 5(Essential) about the importance of Omni-Channel Capabilities for their adoption by Apparel and Fashion retailers in India. The Likert responses designed for dependent variable Omni-Channel Retail Experience seek to understand the likelihood of attaining the experiential aspects on a scale of 1(Not Likely) to 5(Certainly), when the key Omni-Channel Capabilities are adopted.

Since the key constructs and variables were identified from triangulation of expert interviews and extensive literature review, they were treated as fairly important variables. So, instead of using a bipolar scale to check whether they were important or not, a unipolar scale was found to be more appropriate to measure the strength or the extent to which the variables are important from the retailers' point of view. Also, since our objective was to find the most important capabilities and dimensions that influence Omni-Channel Retail Experience, it could be achieved by finding the most essential ones through unipolar scales.

Moreover, while dealing with emerging areas such as Omni-Channel Retailing, a bipolar scale might result in respondents tending to choose a neutral point when they are unable to understand the questionnaire well, leading to an incorrect outcome from this research. But, on the other hand, a unipolar scale ensures the responses are graded on the importance measure with no neutral point, resulting in clear identification of key capabilities (Dillman et al., 2009; Krosnick & Berent, 1993). And, a 5-point scale is usually the recommended practice for items measured using unipolar response options (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997). It has also been found that unipolar scales have a maximum reliability and validity when designed using 5-point scales (Krosnick & Berent, 1993).

The questionnaire instrument was structured into 3 sections for ease of comprehending the responses and ensure the respondents have a structured flow of thoughts while responding to the questions. Below is a brief description of each section:

1) General Information: This section was designed to collect information about the name of the retail organization, its holding company, its geographical business presence (Domestic or Multinational) and number of brands they retail (Single or Multi). It also collected respondents' location, their experience in retail industry domain and their designation in the organization. The data collected were nominal in nature and was positioned at the beginning of the questionnaire.

2) Expert opinion on adopting Capabilities towards Omni-Channel Retailing: In this section, the executives were asked to indicate the priority they place on a scale of 1 (Not a Priority) to 5 (Essential), for each of the capabilities concerning Organized Retailers in India evolving towards Omni-Channel Retailing strategy.

3) Expert opinion on ascertaining experiential aspects through Omni-Channel Retailing: In this section, based on the responses to the questions on Omni-Channel Capabilities in section 2, the executives were asked to indicate the likelihood on a scale of 1 (Not Likely) to 5 (Certainly), for attaining each of the experiential aspects by retail organizations through the adoption of those Omni-Channel Capabilities.

The instrument was subjected to a thorough validation to make it more understandable and relevant to respondents, as explained in the next sub-section.

3.4 Validation of the Instrument

The designed questionnaire instrument was subjected to screening through expert reviews to refine any obvious flaws in the scales. Though the instrument carries high content validity as the measurement items were developed based on thorough review of prior literature, the instrument validity of the questionnaire was reviewed with retail domain experts as well as academicians to establish content validity and face validity ensuring its acceptability, understandability and relevance before administering to the respondents. It was also aimed at ensuring that the questionnaire instrument will be adequate in order to accomplish the objectives of the research.

Accordingly, the instrument was submitted to a review panel consisting of two experts from retail domain and two senior academicians. A thorough discussion was organized with these experts to evaluate the content, purpose and language of the questionnaire instrument. The experts were requested to review the structure of construct to items mapping, comprehensiveness of the items measuring the respective constructs, language of the questions and the correctness of scale response options. The validation procedure assessed if the items used in the questionnaire were appropriate, provide enough coverage and are representative of the constructs which they were supposed to be measuring.

Based on the inputs from the review, the questionnaire was refined and modified further by dropping one item: “Synchronized back office systems and processes” and adding six new items to measure respective constructs: “Chatbot for automated customer support”, “Location based offers to customers in the vicinity”, “Real-time visibility of orders through centralized Order Management System”, “Steering committee with cross-functional members driving Omni-Channel mission”, “Transfer-in products from an alternate store when unavailable to collect at the chosen store”, “Enabled with Customer Intelligence through Sentiment Analysis of social media messages”.

There were few minor modifications with respect to grammar and vocabulary of some of the scale items. There were also suggestions to rephrase the constructs appropriately. The modified constructs after rephrasing were: “Digital Technology Adoption”, “Personalized Content and Recommendations”, “In-store Technology Adoption”, “Consistent Brand Image across Channels”, “Empowered Customer Facing Associates”, “Stores with Distinctive Features”, “Customer Data Management and Privacy Protection” and “Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns”.

The last suggestion was to merge the constructs "Unified Organization Structure" and "Change Management and Corporate Governance" into one construct phrased as "Unified Organization Structure and Change Management". The refined list after the review contained 9 constructs for independent variables and 1 construct for dependent variable. There were 65 measurement scale items in total for both independent and dependent variables. The questionnaire instrument was also designed to capture key demographic or nominal variable values pertaining to respondents, such as: Location,

Education, Gender, Designation, Experience, Retail Organization, Holding Company, Business Presence, and No. of Brands. The revised instrument was then subjected to a pilot study to further validate its reliability and responsiveness through a small representative sample, as explained in the subsequent sub-section.

3.5 Pilot Study

The pilot study was the final step in questionnaire validation procedure to test for its internal validity and reliability ahead of commencing full-fledged Quantitative study. Pilot studies can be time-consuming and challenging sometimes, but experts mostly suggest it is better to deal with it before investing the actual time and effort in the full study (Mason & Zuercher, 1995). It helps in examining the acceptability of the questionnaire by the final target sample and identify any potential issues in advance, in order to improve the quality of the questionnaire.

The pilot study involved administering the questionnaire to a relatively smaller sample of 30 retail executives as respondents chosen through purposive sampling across Apparel and Fashion retailers. The pilot sample was a representative of the final target sample determined for the Quantitative study, having similar characteristics. The average experience of the respondents was about 12 years in retail industry domain. About 60% of the respondents were from Single Brand retail, while 40% were from Multi Brand retail, as illustrated in figure 6. Based on their retail organization's business presence, the respondents were spread across with 53% from Domestic retail organizations, while 47% from Multinational retail organizations, as illustrated in figure 7.

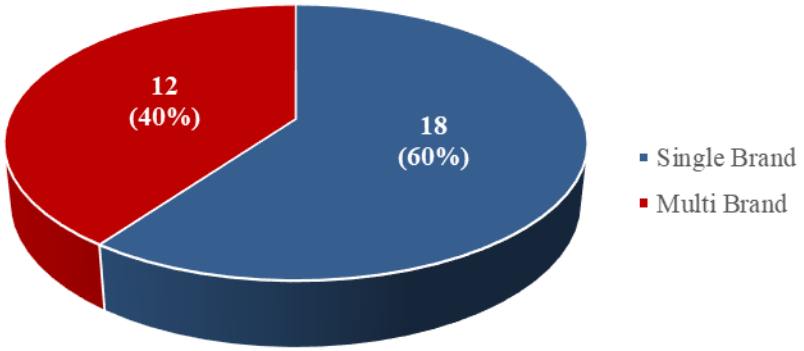


Figure 6. Respondents by No. of Brands

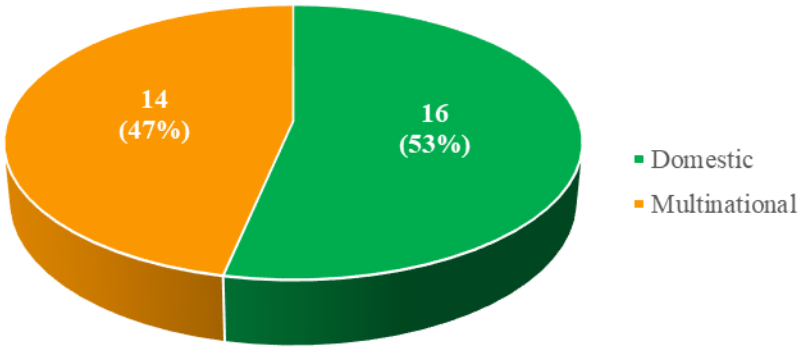


Figure 7. Respondents by Retail Business Presence

The Reliability of Likert Scale responses for each construct in the designed instrument were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics v21 software by obtaining respective Cronbach's Alpha values. On observing the Alpha values obtained for each of the scales measuring respective constructs, the values for most of the construct scales were very close to 0.7 or > 0.7, except for three construct scales: Consistent Brand Image across Channels (0.563), Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns (0.665) and Omni-Channel Retail Experience (0.407). It was further observed that some of the scale items had relatively higher standard deviations. Based on the reliability analysis, item correlations and standard deviations of items from pilot test data obtained for each of the scales, it was learnt that some of the questions needed rephrasing to make it simpler to

understand for respondents and some needed to be dropped completely that appeared to be redundant with other similar questions.

Thus, the pilot study resulted in dropping off eight items and rephrasing few items from the questionnaire (Boateng et al., 2018), without jeopardizing its measuring quality. The eight items that were dropped are: "Uniformity in standard offers across all channels" from Consistent Brand Image across Channels (0.563), "Order products online to be delivered to a preferred location" from Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns (0.665), and “Create a refreshing shopping environment for customers”, “Create a delightful shopping environment for customers”, “Make shopping pleasurable to customers”, “Create a memorable shopping experience”, “Create a wonderful shopping experience”, “Stimulate happiness in customers” from Omni-Channel Retail Experience (0.407).

These eight items had low or negative correlations as well as low standard deviations, and the reliability analysis indicated that removing these items from the scales would result in increasing the scales’ Cronbach’s Alpha values. The other constructs which had Alpha values close to but slightly below 0.7 did not indicate an increase in Alpha values by removing any of their scale items and since they were already close to 0.7, it was decided to retain as is. The enhanced Alpha values obtained after removing the aforesaid items are illustrated in table 6 below.

Table 6. Enhanced Cronbach’s Alpha for the Scales from Pilot Study Data

Construct/Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha
Digital Technology Adoption	0.717
Personalized Content and Recommendations	0.688
Unified Organization Structure and Change Management	0.749
In-store Technology Adoption	0.692
Consistent Brand Image across Channels	0.700
Empowered Customer Facing Associates	0.791
Stores with Distinctive Features	0.688
Customer Data Management and Privacy Protection	0.699
Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns	0.716
Omni-Channel Retail Experience	0.729

It was also observed that each respondent took less than 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire and appeared to be a reasonable time to respondents. The final revised instrument after necessary modifications as a result of the pilot study contained about 51 items as part of the nine independent variables and 6 items as part of the dependent variable, tallying to a total of 57 items overall, measuring respective independent and dependent variable constructs as listed in table 7 below.

Table 7. Final List of Constructs and Multi-Item Measurement Scales

Sl. No.	Construct	Multi-Item Measurement Scale	Questionnaire Item No.
1	Digital Technology Adoption (DTA)	1. Digital coupons through mobile applications 2. Digital loyalty cards through mobile applications 3. Marketing campaigns through Social media platforms 4. Virtual Trial Room for online channels 5. Responsive Ads that automatically adjust to fit available ad space through Ad network platforms 6. Chatbot for automated customer support	Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q5 Q6
2	Personalized Content and Recommendations (PCR)	7. Customized offers based on individual preferences and purchase patterns 8. Customized offers driven by individual contextual data (events or situations) 9. Personalized offers when customers are in the vicinity 10. Relevant product or assortment recommendations 11. Customized online shopping environment	Q7 Q8 Q9 Q10 Q11

3	Unified Organization Structure and Change Management (UOSCM)	12. Collaboration among departments (or functions) through integrated business model 13. Coordination between online and offline operations 14. Collaboration between IT and other business functions 15. Centralized marketing function for all channels 16. Real-time visibility of orders through centralized Order Management System 17. IT department governed as a horizontal function across the organization 18. Cross-functional steering committee driving Omni-Channel mission 19. Governance model tracking performance of cross-channel processes	Q12 Q13 Q14 Q15 Q16 Q17 Q18 Q19
4	In-store Technology Adoption (ITA)	20. Self-service kiosks providing online access within stores 21. Virtual Trial Room or Interactive Mirror within the store 22. Digital signage displaying dynamic content on screens in the store 23. Interactive advertising platform in the store 24. Contactless payments through mobile Wallets 25. Devices tracking customer movement in the store	Q20 Q21 Q22 Q23 Q24 Q25

5	Consistent Brand Image across Channels (CBIC)	26. Consistent product pricing across channels 27. Uniformity in value proposition across all touch points 28. Similar customer services provided across channels 29. Consistency in font used for textual content across all touch points 30. Congruency in logo, images or icons used for visual content across all touch points 31. Consistency in colors used across all touch points	Q26 Q27 Q28 Q29 Q30 Q31
6	Empowered Customer Facing Associates (ECFA)	32. Special incentive or bonus scheme to associates with cross-channel responsibilities 33. Specific training to associates on cross-channel responsibilities 34. Equipped with technologies and devices for insights on products, customers and purchases data 35. Enabled with Customer Intelligence through Sentiment Analysis of social media messages	Q32 Q33 Q34 Q35
7	Stores with Distinctive Features (SDF)	36. Locate nearby stores through online channels 37. Compare prices of similar products online 38. Visibility into customer reviews and ratings 39. Competitive price-matching in the store	Q36 Q37 Q38 Q39 Q40 Q41 Q42

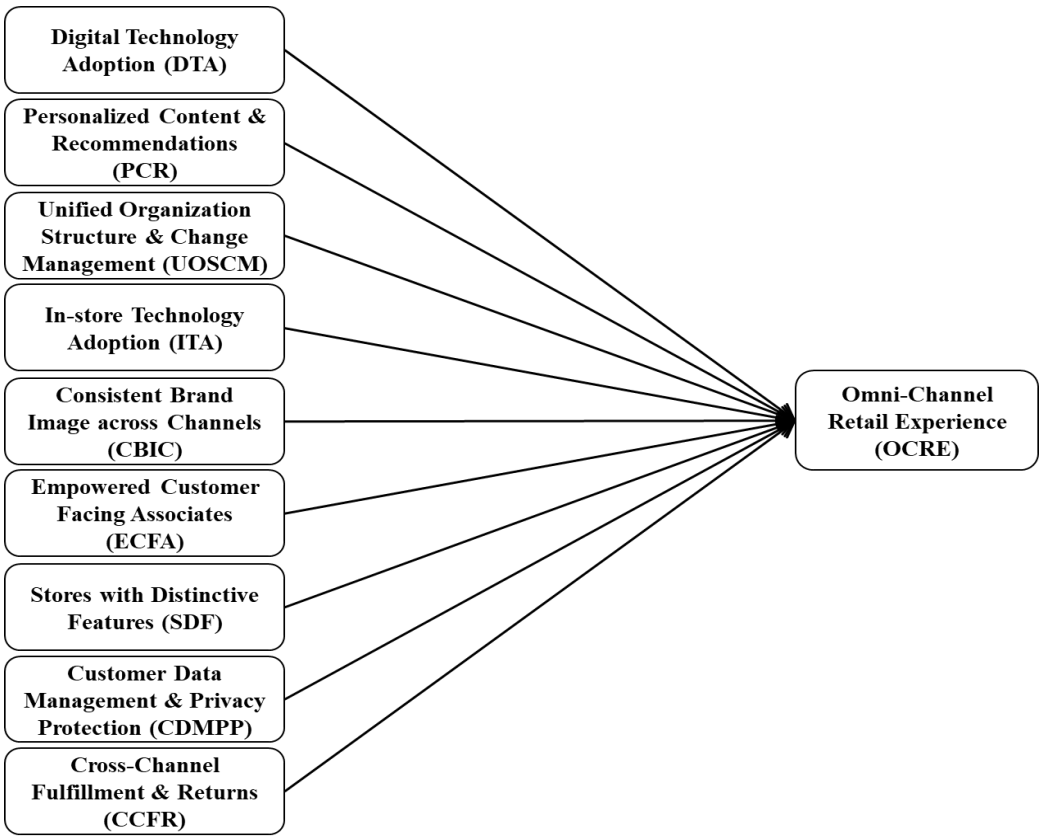
		40. Faster checkout through mobile Point-of-Sale 41. Real-time stock availability of products 42. Real-time shipment status updates	
8	Customer Data Management and Privacy Protection (CDMPP)	43. Systematically aggregate and blend customer data from multiple channels 44. Fraud protection for customer data passing through various systems 45. Confidentiality of customer information stored on various platforms 46. Custodian within the organization for owning, controlling and sharing customer data	Q43 Q44 Q45 Q46
9	Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns (CCFR)	47. Allow ordering products online to collect them at a nearest store 48. Transfer-in products from an alternate store when unavailable to collect at the chosen store 49. Allow products purchased online to be returned at a nearest store 50. Ship products from a nearest store when warehouse is farther 51. Deliver products within few hours or same day or on a selected date to the preferred location	Q47 Q48 Q49 Q50 Q51
10	Omni-Channel Retail Experience (OCRE)	52. Create a relaxing shopping environment for customers 53. Make shopping to be satisfying for customers 54. Create an engaging shopping environment for customers	Q52 Q53 Q54 Q55 Q56 Q57

		55. Provide a unique shopping experience to customers 56. Stimulate a good mood in customers during shopping 57. Makes shopping to be more exciting to customers	

Lastly, based on non-responsiveness by respondents to Education and Gender demographic fields, it was decided to drop off these two nominal variables, as it was not deemed to be vital for this study. As per the pilot sample respondents, the study is with respect to retail organization level capabilities eliciting executive responses from the organizational perspective and not from an individual's perspective. Hence, these two demographic fields would not provide much value to the study overall.

3.6 Revised Conceptual Framework

As a result of ascertaining the most important constructs through Qualitative Study, subsequent validation procedures and the Pilot Study detailed above, the initial conceptual framework recognized earlier was revisited and revised accordingly. It is important for retailers to elevate Omni-Channel Retail Experience by building key capabilities around these constructs (dimensions): leveraging technologies, creating Cross-Channel processes, empowering associates, delivering personalization, integrating organization functions, consistent messaging and ensuring data privacy. The revised conceptual framework is as shown in figure 8 below.


Digital Technology Adoption (DTA)
Personalized Content & Recommendations (PCR)
Unified Organization Structure & Change Management (UOSCM)
In-store Technology Adoption (ITA)
Consistent Brand Image across Channels (CBIC)
Empowered Customer Facing Associates (ECFA)
Stores with Distinctive Features (SDF)
Customer Data Management & Privacy Protection (CDMPP)
Cross-Channel Fulfillment & Returns (CCFR)
Omni-Channel Retail Experience (OCRE)

Source: Developed by the Author

Figure 8. Revised Conceptual Framework

The revised conceptual framework is further examined after ascertaining the strength and the direction (positive or negative) of association between the Omni-Channel Constructs and Omni-Channel Retail Experience, through Quantitative Study. This will ensure in signifying the key Omni-Channel Constructs influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience, for Organized Retailers in India focused on Apparel and Fashion category.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Data analysis in mixed methods research depends on the underlying research design. For the current study which follows a Sequential Exploratory Design, it involved creating codes and themes from the transcripts of the initial Qualitative Study stage, and counting the number of times they occur in order to obtain the most commonly referred Omni-Channel Constructs by retailers in India. These Constructs were used to design a survey instrument that is grounded in the views of experts and prior literature (Carpenter, 2018). In the subsequent Quantitative Study stage, the instrument was applied to a sample representing the population (Creswell, 2009) of Organized Retailers in India focused on Apparel and Fashion category.

The quantitative data obtained was statistically tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the fitness of the data to the model, in order to derive the Omni-Channel Constructs that are significantly associated to Omni-Channel Retail Experience. It was further examined using ANOVA and Crosstabs for deeper insights into Omni-Channel Capabilities across different groups of retailers based on Organizational demographics, such as Single vs Multi Brand retailers and Domestic vs Multinational retailers within the Apparel and Fashion category. While the Qualitative Study part has been explained in the previous section, the Quantitative Study part is detailed below involving appropriate statistical techniques.

4.1 Quantitative Study

The final structured questionnaire instrument developed was administered to a sample of 450 executives drawn from Apparel and Fashion retailers in India, based on the sampling procedure explained earlier. The instrument elicited their responses towards the importance of key Omni-Channel Retail Capabilities and their influence on Omni-Channel Retail Experience. Respondents were assured about the confidentiality of their identities and responses, and that the data will be strictly used for only academic research purposes, at the beginning of the survey. Thus ensuring ethical considerations before collecting the data from the target respondents.

The data was collected on 5-point Unipolar Likert Scales along with other demographic fields as nominal data. The data was coded using appropriate numerical

codes for Likert responses as well as other nominal demographic data, for ease of representing the answer options and feed them into the software system, to perform statistical analysis of required data. The key numerical codes used for analysis are as illustrated in table 8 below.

Table 8. Key Numerical Response Codes

Field	Code Values
Retail Business Presence	1 = "Domestic" 2 = "Multinational"
No. of Brands	1 = "Single" 2 = "Multi"
Priority Scale for Omni-Channel Capabilities	1 = "Not a Priority" 2 = "Low Priority" 3 = "Medium Priority" 4 = "High Priority" 5 = "Essential"
Likelihood Scale for Omni-Channel Retail Experience	1 = "Not Likely" 2 = "Somewhat Likely" 3 = "Likely" 4 = "Most Likely" 5 = "Certainly"

The respondents were also instructed that this survey was designed to be taken by executives with substantial experience in retail industry domain having awareness on Multi-Channel / Omni-Channel Retailing, and representing Organized Retailers in India focused on Apparel & Fashion category. The data was collected from executives belonging to Apparel & Fashion retailers in India. A total of about 403 completed questionnaires were received. Further analysis of data was performed on the total sample of 403 respondents with no missing data or outliers. The average experience of the respondents was about 11 years in retail industry domain. The spread of respondents based on the Organizational demographics captured is as depicted in table 9 below.

Table 9. Respondent Spread

Organizational Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Retail Business Presence		
• Domestic	270	67%
• Multinational	133	33%
Total	403	100%
No. of Brands		
• Single Brand	284	70%
• Multi Brand	119	30%
Total	403	100%
Location		
• Bengaluru	310	77%
• Mumbai	75	19%
• Gurugram	10	2%
• New Delhi	8	2%
Total	403	100%

The quantitative data was tested for internal consistency of the measurement scales for each construct through reliability analysis by estimating respective scale's Cronbach's Alpha values similar to the procedure followed with data from pilot study. It was observed that Cronbach's Alpha values for all the scales measuring respective constructs in the final instrument were > 0.7 which are in the acceptable range for the scales' reliability and internal consistency. The values obtained for each of the scales measuring respective constructs are as depicted in table 10 below.

Table 10. Cronbach's Alpha for the Scales from Final Data

Construct	No. of Manifest Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Digital Technology Adoption (DTA)	6	0.723

Personalized Content and Recommendations (PCR)	5	0.764
Unified Organization Structure and Change Management (UOSCM)	8	0.744
In-store Technology Adoption (ITA)	6	0.726
Consistent Brand Image across Channels (CBIC)	6	0.723
Empowered Customer Facing Associates (ECFA)	4	0.703
Stores with Distinctive Features (SDF)	7	0.722
Customer Data Management and Privacy Protection (CDMPP)	4	0.709
Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns (CCFR)	5	0.773
Omni-Channel Retail Experience (OCRE)	6	0.753

As the variables in this study were latent constructs describing unobserved variables, and the information about these latent constructs were obtained through observed variables, a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was the appropriate statistical technique to examine the covariation among the observed variables (Elangovan & Rajendran, 2015). Moreover, the research questions demand examining the influence of multiple independent Omni-Channel Constructs on the dependent construct Omni-Channel Retail Experience.

A first generation technique such as linear regression would not be able to examine the association between multiple latent constructs and a dependent construct simultaneously, which otherwise needs running it multiple times with different combinations to derive a valid model. Thus, SEM reckoned to be a more suitable technique for this research. But, before proceeding with SEM analysis, the data was to be evaluated for the assumptions on Normality, Linear relationship between independent and dependent variables, Homoscedasticity and Multicollinearity, as a prerequisite, which is detailed in the subsequent section.

4.2 Normality, Homoscedasticity and Multicollinearity of Data

From prior studies (Morrison et al., 2017), it has been suggested that if the sample size is sufficiently large, the normality test is not essential. However, the data was

checked for Multivariate Normality, as it is one of the critical assumption when performing SEM analysis (Schreiber et al., 2006). Also, prior studies (Lumley et al., 2002) suggest that tests of Multivariate Normality for large samples tend to be over-powered (significant even when the departure from normality is too small) thus rejecting the normality assumption when the deviation from normal is relatively minor.

Hence, Multivariate Normality was checked primarily using IBM SPSS AMOS software, where the data was examined for Skewness indices, Kurtosis indices and Mardia's coefficient. It is suggested that absolute values of Skewness indices <3 and Kurtosis indices <10 indicate a normally distributed data (Chou & Bentler, 1995). Critical Ratios (CR) attached to Kurtosis represents Mardia's normalized estimate of Multivariate Kurtosis, and the CR values <5 indicate a normally distributed data. From the values observed in the AMOS output as depicted in table 11 below on the assessment of indices for normality, it was ascertained that the data satisfies Multivariate Normality assumption for SEM analysis.

Table 11. Assessment of Normality

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
Q57	2	5	-0.162	-1.327	-1.108	-4.539
Q56	2	5	0.163	1.338	-1.155	-4.733
Q55	2	5	-0.135	-1.103	-1.087	-4.453
Q54	2	5	-0.157	-1.285	-1.149	-4.71
Q53	2	5	0.15	1.233	-1.16	-4.752
Q52	1	4	-0.141	-1.16	-1.046	-4.285
Q47	2	5	-0.175	-1.43	-0.654	-2.681
Q48	1	4	-0.539	-4.417	-0.616	-2.526
Q49	2	5	-0.442	-3.623	-0.751	-3.075
Q50	1	4	-0.091	-0.747	-0.765	-3.135
Q51	1	4	-0.104	-0.849	-0.9	-3.688
Q43	2	5	-0.363	-2.977	-0.262	-1.073
Q44	2	5	-0.172	-1.407	-0.708	-2.903
Q45	2	5	-0.229	-1.873	-0.737	-3.021

Q46	2	5	-0.306	-2.509	-0.411	-1.684
Q36	2	5	-0.285	-2.335	-0.363	-1.486
Q37	2	5	-0.203	-1.668	-0.463	-1.896
Q38	2	5	-0.412	-3.377	-0.542	-2.219
Q39	1	4	0.043	0.349	-0.921	-3.774
Q40	2	5	-0.203	-1.663	-0.445	-1.824
Q41	3	5	0.073	0.594	-1.208	-4.951
Q42	3	5	0.075	0.617	-1.412	-5.784
Q32	2	5	-0.064	-0.528	-1.043	-4.272
Q33	2	5	-0.133	-1.087	-0.877	-3.594
Q34	2	5	-0.159	-1.303	-0.895	-3.668
Q35	2	5	-0.068	-0.553	-0.628	-2.573
Q26	2	5	0.078	0.638	-0.696	-2.851
Q27	2	5	-0.127	-1.042	-0.583	-2.39
Q28	1	4	0.323	2.65	-0.287	-1.177
Q29	2	5	-0.134	-1.096	-0.779	-3.193
Q30	3	5	0.249	2.039	-1.18	-4.834
Q31	3	5	0.425	3.481	-0.863	-3.538
Q20	2	5	-0.176	-1.445	-0.766	-3.138
Q21	2	5	-0.128	-1.05	-0.748	-3.063
Q22	2	5	-0.107	-0.88	-1.077	-4.412
Q23	2	5	-0.098	-0.806	-0.867	-3.551
Q24	2	5	-0.214	-1.754	-0.718	-2.942
Q25	1	4	-0.01	-0.083	-0.895	-3.666
Q12	2	5	-0.112	-0.921	-1.074	-4.399
Q13	2	5	-0.176	-1.444	-1.018	-4.17
Q14	2	5	-0.206	-1.691	-0.802	-3.286
Q15	1	4	-0.138	-1.128	-0.625	-2.56
Q16	2	5	-0.181	-1.486	-0.939	-3.849
Q17	2	5	-0.253	-2.073	-0.842	-3.452
Q18	1	4	-0.016	-0.13	-1.035	-4.242

Q19	1	4	-0.013	-0.109	-1.139	-4.668
Q7	2	5	-0.15	-1.227	-0.987	-4.043
Q8	2	5	-0.158	-1.293	-0.841	-3.447
Q9	1	4	-0.035	-0.285	-0.975	-3.996
Q10	2	5	-0.093	-0.76	-0.842	-3.451
Q11	1	4	-0.097	-0.795	-0.91	-3.729
Q1	2	5	-0.141	-1.152	-0.833	-3.413
Q2	2	5	-0.227	-1.864	-0.978	-4.01
Q3	2	5	-0.195	-1.602	-1.108	-4.538
Q4	1	5	-0.399	-3.27	-0.129	-0.527
Q5	1	4	-0.244	-1.997	-0.87	-3.567
Q6	1	4	0.144	1.183	-1.009	-4.134
Multivariate					-24.782	-3.033

In order to further ascertain Multivariate Normality of data, the residuals were observed if they follow a normal distribution. It was examined using Normal Probability-Probability (P-P) plot and Histogram of regression residual distribution. It was found to be satisfactorily meeting the assumption of normality. The residual values obtained are illustrated in table 12 below. The Normal P-P plot and Histogram are depicted in figure 9 and figure 10 respectively below.

Table 12. Residuals Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2.9073	3.9280	3.3648	.16092	403
Residual	-1.78231	1.35500	.00000	.67023	403
Std. Predicted Value	-2.843	3.500	.000	1.000	403
Std. Residual	-2.629	1.999	.000	.989	403
a. Dependent Variable: OCRE					

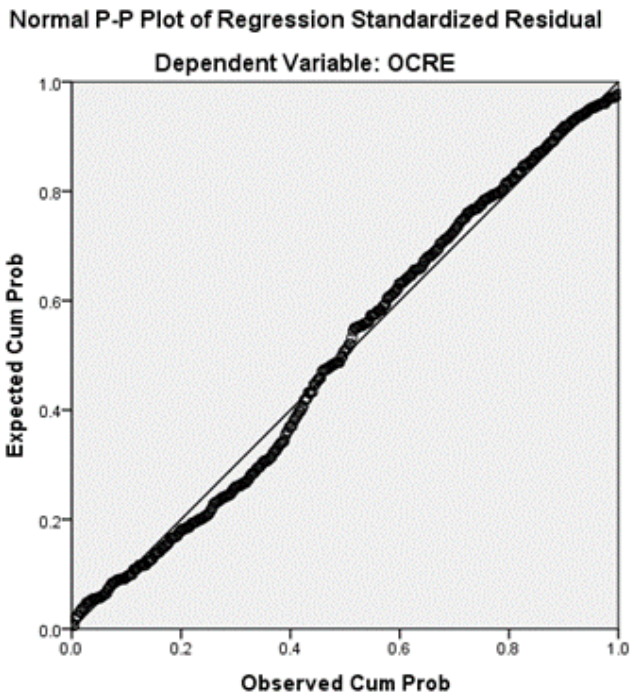


Figure 9. Probability-Probability Plot of Residuals

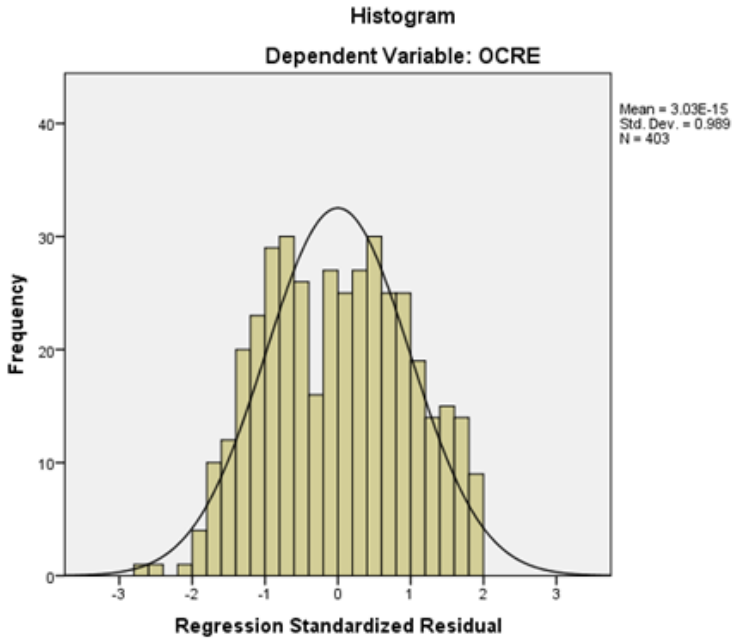


Figure 10. Histogram of Residuals

Next, checking for Homoscedasticity, i.e., if the variance of error terms are similar across the values of the independent variables, it was examined using a Scatter Plot of residuals versus predicted values to show whether points are equally distributed across all values of the independent variables. The points on the plot were equally distributed above and below zero on the X axis, as well as to the left and right of zero on the Y axis. Thus, confirming the data is homoscedastic. The Scatter Plot is as depicted in figure 11 below.

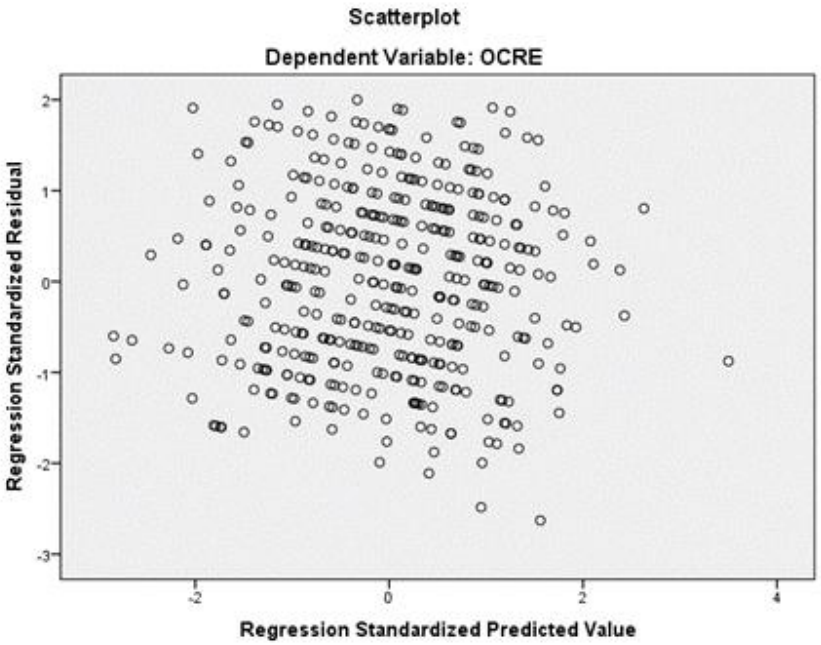


Figure 11. Scatter Plot of Residuals vs Predicted Values

Subsequently, checking for no Multicollinearity problem i.e., the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other, it was examined using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values from the coefficients table, which is the degree that the variances in the regression estimates increase due to multicollinearity. It was observed that all the VIF values were <10 indicating no multicollinearity problem in the data. The values are illustrated in table 13 below.

Table 13. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.859	.564		5.065	.000		
	DTA	.098	.054	.090	1.812	.071	.976	1.025
	PCR	-.102	.050	-.101	-2.040	.042	.986	1.015
	UOSCM	-.011	.059	-.009	-.190	.849	.973	1.028
	ITA	-.062	.057	-.055	-1.099	.273	.972	1.028
	CBIC	.013	.065	.010	.196	.845	.982	1.019
	ECFA	-.091	.050	-.090	-1.826	.069	.989	1.011
	SDF	.063	.069	.046	.913	.362	.962	1.040
	CDMPP	.123	.056	.108	2.186	.029	.984	1.017
	CCFR	.113	.051	.111	2.236	.026	.977	1.024
a. Dependent Variable: OCRE								

Lastly, SEM often assumes linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. In general, if the residuals are normally distributed and homoscedastic, it confirms linearity of the variables.

4.3 Structural Equation Modeling

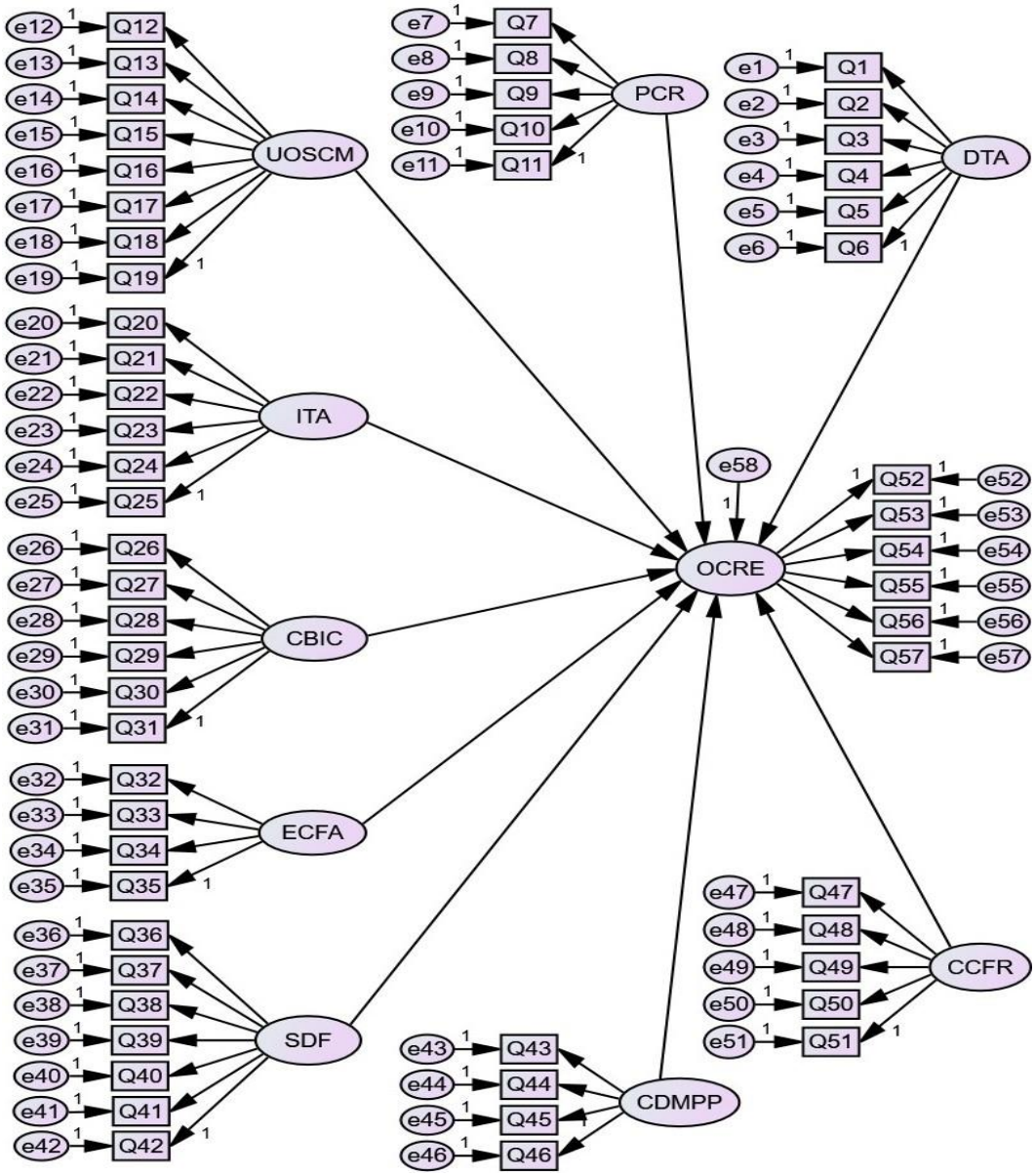
The above validations of Multivariate Normality, Homoscedasticity, Multicollinearity and Linearity determine that the data comes from a normally distributed population and complies with all the assumptions for proceeding with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM is a second generation multivariate data analysis technique used to assess the reliability and validity of model measures or the observed scores from measurement instruments. It allows to build a measurement model for each of the predictor and dependent variables, where multiple observed variables are used to measure the latent constructs of interest (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). SEM is the usual approach for explicit modeling of latent constructs through simultaneous analysis of multiple observed variables measuring each of these constructs. It considers measurement error

explicitly, which can be controlled to get more adequate estimates for the regression coefficients between the latent variables (Kline, 1998).

SEM being a multivariate statistical procedure with a hybrid of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Multiple Regression, it assumes linear relationships of constructs. Testing the interrelationships of constructs specified a priori using SEM takes a confirmatory approach to data analysis (Morrison et al., 2017). It is recommended to apply Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) on measuring instruments irrespective of whether Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was applied or not, in order to evaluate a model's goodness of fit (Hinkin et al., 1997).

Thus, the data was further examined through IBM SPSS Statistics and IBM SPSS AMOS software, to confirm the factor structure for the developed scale, using SEM by applying the Maximum Likelihood estimation method. As a CFA model mainly focuses on the relationship between factors and their manifest items, it represents a Measurement Model within SEM. Thus, SEM in this research involved analyzing the Measurement Model followed by the Structural Model (Schreiber et al., 2006). The combined analysis of the Measurement and the Structural Models enable the measurement errors of the observed variables to be analyzed as an integral part of the model (Elangovan & Rajendran, 2015).

This research leverages one of the biggest strengths of SEM, which is its ability to distinguish between latent constructs and manifest variables, where the effect of an unobserved variable is measured through its observable items. And, the latent constructs should be measured using at least two manifest variables each. Here, the initial model is usually specified a priori based on the review of prior literature and qualitative interviews with experts in the domain. Then, an understanding of the variables or constructs for the study and the relationship between them are derived, which can be further modified based on the experience of researcher and propose a conceptual model. The goal is to test the goodness of fit of the model to the data and corroborate that the theory is supported by the data obtained, by drawing insights through a disciplined analysis (Elangovan & Rajendran, 2015). A graphical representation of the model conceptualized for this research from triangulation of prior literature and Qualitative interviews is as shown in figure 12 below.



Source: Developed by the Author

Figure 12. Model for Omni-Channel Constructs Influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience

The model was first evaluated for its fitness of the observed data. It was observed to be an over-identified model with positive degrees of freedom, as required for an SEM analysis that can be of scientific use. It consisted of 1653 distinct sample moments from which the estimates of the default model were computed and 123 distinct parameters to

be estimated, leaving 1530 degrees of freedom as illustrated in table 14 below. The analysis of the model parameters indicated that all ten factors (Latent Constructs) and corresponding scale items (Manifest Variables) were loaded in accordance with the conceptualized structure.

Evaluating the model fit, the overall chi-square value for the model was statistically significant ($\chi 2 = 1831.628$; df = 1530; $p < 0.01$) and was closer to the degrees of freedom, indicating a good fit (Thacker et al., 1989). In addition to chi-square, earlier studies (Schreiber et al., 2006; Hu & Bentler, 1999) recommend evaluating other indices such as Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) to assess a model's fitness. The fit indices observed for the above model were in the acceptable range indicating a good fit of the observed data to the model. The values of the model fit indices obtained are summarized in table 15 below.

Table 14. Computation of Degrees of Freedom

Number of distinct sample moments	1653
Number of distinct parameters to be estimated	123
Degrees of freedom (df) (1653 - 123)	1530

Table 15. Model Fit Indices

Model $\chi 2$	df	p-value	CMIN/df	TLI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA
1831.63	1530	0.000	1.197	0.93	0.93	0.89	0.88	0.02

The Measurement Model describes relationship between the latent constructs and observed variables, but does not explain the relationships between latent constructs. It tests for the degree to which the manifest variables represent respective constructs. The Measurement Model in this study comprises of ten factors or latent constructs measured using multiple observed variables or scale items. It was evident that all the individual scale items loaded significantly on respective latent constructs. Each item reported a probability value $p < 0.001$ indicating a good fit of the measurement model with the data statistically. And, the observed values of regression estimates for the scale items or

manifest variables were > 0.5 which is in the acceptable range indicating a good fit. The estimates and probability values obtained for the Measurement Model pertaining to the scale items measuring respective constructs are as depicted in table 16 below.

Table 16. Measurement Model Results

Measurement Model			Estimate	Standard Error (S.E.)	Critical Ratio (C.R.)	P
Q6	<---	DTA	1.000			
Q5	<---	DTA	1.090	.123	8.866	***
Q4	<---	DTA	.872	.115	7.554	***
Q3	<---	DTA	1.116	.129	8.635	***
Q2	<---	DTA	1.008	.121	8.334	***
Q1	<---	DTA	.545	.100	5.470	***
Q11	<---	PCR	1.000			
Q10	<---	PCR	.892	.109	8.200	***
Q9	<---	PCR	1.256	.128	9.785	***
Q8	<---	PCR	1.101	.118	9.358	***
Q7	<---	PCR	1.074	.120	8.938	***
Q19	<---	UOSCM	1.000			
Q18	<---	UOSCM	.924	.075	12.288	***
Q17	<---	UOSCM	.540	.069	7.798	***
Q16	<---	UOSCM	.482	.071	6.836	***
Q15	<---	UOSCM	.730	.064	11.366	***
Q14	<---	UOSCM	.476	.067	7.059	***
Q13	<---	UOSCM	.344	.072	4.774	***
Q12	<---	UOSCM	.743	.074	10.004	***
Q25	<---	ITA	1.000			
Q24	<---	ITA	.795	.076	10.412	***
Q23	<---	ITA	.506	.075	6.741	***
Q22	<---	ITA	.851	.085	10.058	***
Q21	<---	ITA	.643	.073	8.775	***
Q20	<---	ITA	.511	.073	7.012	***

Q31	<---	CBIC	1.000			
Q30	<---	CBIC	1.043	.151	6.887	***
Q29	<---	CBIC	1.511	.198	7.651	***
Q28	<---	CBIC	1.498	.187	7.995	***
Q27	<---	CBIC	1.214	.173	7.015	***
Q26	<---	CBIC	1.272	.180	7.051	***
Q35	<---	ECFA	1.000			
Q34	<---	ECFA	1.100	.130	8.462	***
Q33	<---	ECFA	.893	.119	7.506	***
Q32	<---	ECFA	1.250	.144	8.666	***
Q42	<---	SDF	1.000			
Q41	<---	SDF	.914	.160	5.713	***
Q40	<---	SDF	1.324	.193	6.874	***
Q39	<---	SDF	1.886	.265	7.117	***
Q38	<---	SDF	1.082	.186	5.813	***
Q37	<---	SDF	1.203	.191	6.307	***
Q36	<---	SDF	1.199	.185	6.474	***
Q46	<---	CDMPP	1.000			
Q45	<---	CDMPP	.935	.112	8.373	***
Q44	<---	CDMPP	.902	.108	8.389	***
Q43	<---	CDMPP	.881	.103	8.596	***
Q51	<---	CCFR	1.000			
Q50	<---	CCFR	.967	.093	10.358	***
Q49	<---	CCFR	1.123	.103	10.858	***
Q48	<---	CCFR	1.016	.099	10.289	***
Q47	<---	CCFR	.681	.085	8.023	***
Q52	<---	OCRE	1.000			
Q53	<---	OCRE	.945	.104	9.132	***
Q54	<---	OCRE	1.024	.106	9.685	***
Q55	<---	OCRE	1.021	.104	9.815	***
Q56	<---	OCRE	.744	.099	7.538	***

Q57	<---	OCRE	.798	.098	8.106	***

*** indicates that the respective items are significant at p < 0.001

Further, observing the standardized factor loadings for the manifest variables measuring each of the constructs, it was found that all the values were > 0.5, which is at the acceptable level (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The latent constructs share greater variance with the corresponding measurement items than other latent constructs. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was calculated manually for all the constructs as AMOS software does not support this feature at this point. The AVE indicates the overall amount of variance in the items accounted for by the respective latent constructs (Hair et al., 2006). The AVE values for all the constructs in the model were >= 0.5, which is the common acceptance threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). It reflects the overall proportion of variance in the indicator variables accounted for by the respective latent construct. Thus, establishing the Convergent Validity of the Measurement Model.

In order to confirm if the measurements are free from error so that the instrument yields consistent results, the data was also assessed for Construct Reliability of the model using Composite Reliability values (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Composite Reliability (CR) measures the overall reliability of the manifest items loaded on to respective latent constructs, whose values should ideally be > 0.7 to be considered acceptable. The CR was calculated manually for all the constructs in the model, whose values were > 0.8, indicating a good reliability and adequate internal consistency. The AVE and CR obtained for each construct is presented in table 17 below.

Table 17. Average Variance Extracted and Composite Reliability of the Constructs

Construct	AVE	CR
DTA	0.502	0.855
PCR	0.532	0.850
UOSCM	0.543	0.904
ITA	0.525	0.868
CBIC	0.499	0.856

ECFA	0.512	0.805
SDF	0.504	0.876
CDMPP	0.515	0.809
CCFR	0.575	0.871
OCRE	0.565	0.886

The Structural Model was analyzed to examine the degree to which the nine latent constructs representing independent variables are related to Omni-Channel Retail Experience (OCRE) construct representing the dependent variable. The standardized regression weights were used to compare the relative effect of each of the constructs on Omni-Channel Retail Experience (OCRE). The standardized estimates and probability values signifying the association between the constructs of the Structural Model are depicted in table 18 below.

Table 18. Structural Model Results

Structural Model			Estimate	Standard Error (S.E.)	Critical Ratio (C.R.)	P
OCRE	<---	ITA	-.054	.057	-.958	.338
OCRE	<---	UOSCM	.001	.052	.013	.989
OCRE	<---	DTA	.172	.074	2.318	.020
OCRE	<---	ECFA	-.162	.080	-2.019	.043
OCRE	<---	PCR	-.160	.074	-2.151	.031
OCRE	<---	CDMPP	.169	.079	2.140	.032
OCRE	<---	CCFR	.135	.066	2.044	.041
OCRE	<---	CBIC	.023	.117	.201	.841
OCRE	<---	SDF	.112	.121	.932	.351

The strength of association between Omni-Channel Constructs and Omni-Channel Retail Experience were examined, based on the analysis of Structural Model results. Accordingly, noting the P-values of the estimates for each of the associations, it was observed that some of the constructs were significantly associated with OCRE, while the other constructs did not emerge to be significant in influencing OCRE.

SEM analysis enabled to assess the interrelationships among constructs in order to examine the relationships between independent and dependent variables. It was possible to examine a number of interrelationships simultaneously, using standardized regression estimates and P-values of the Structural Model. The standardized regression results ascertained that the independent variables DTA, CDMPP and CCFR were significantly and positively correlated with the dependent variable OCRE. The independent variables PCR and ECFA were significantly and negatively correlated with the dependent variable OCRE.

The contribution of independent variables UOSCM, ITA, CBIC and SDF were not significantly influencing OCRE. The analysis also confirmed that the data fits the model quite well and no post-hoc modifications were required on the outcome, as the model was reasonably a good fit with parameters in the acceptable range. As a result, Organized Retailers in India can prioritize the most significant Capability Dimensions ascertained accordingly, to deliver an elevated experience. The subsequent sections detail out if there are any differences among the sub-groups of retailers based on Organizational demographics, towards the ascertained Capability Dimensions.

4.4 Differences among Retailers towards Key Capability Dimensions

Considering the key independent variables Digital Technology Adoption (DTA), Personalized Content and Recommendations (PCR), Empowered Customer Facing Associates (ECFA), Customer Data Management and Privacy Protection (CDMPP) and Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns (CCFR) that are significantly influencing the dependent variable Omni-Channel Retail Experience (OCRE), it was further analyzed to ascertain if there is any difference in the perception of retailers towards the adoption of these five Omni-Channel Capability Dimensions and their perception towards OCRE as a result of these capability adoptions. The analysis was with respect to their Organizational demographics such as Number of Brands (Single, Multi) and Business Presence (Domestic, Multinational). This was subsequently followed by observing the differences in manifest variables representing individual capabilities.

One-Way ANOVA was used as a statistical technique to compare the means between different groups. It is generally used to compare the means across two or more

groups. When there are more than two groups, it is usually followed by a post hoc test to find the groups which are significantly different. In this study, ANOVA test was performed to find the difference in the mean scores of DTA, PCR, ECFA, CDMPP, CCFR and OCRE dimensions between different groups of Apparel and Fashion retailers who differ by the Number of Brands they sell (Single, Multi) as well as their Business Presence (Domestic, Multinational). ANOVA test assumes that the sample data is normally distributed and its variance is homogeneous. The normality was confirmed by the visual inspection of the normal Q-Q plot as described earlier, where the line of normality plotted between observed value and expected normal value passed through the points as a straight line. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances was performed whose p value should be >0.05 to meet the assumption for an ANOVA test for the given sample.

4.4.1 ANOVA-Number of Brands

To check if there is any difference in the perception towards the adoption of the Omni-Channel Capability Dimensions and the resulting OCRE among Single and Multi Brand retailers, One-Way ANOVA test was performed. The output of the test is as illustrated in tables 19, 20 and 21 below.

Table 19. Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
DTA	Single	284	3.2066	.62589	.03714	3.1335	3.2797	1.83	4.50
	Multi	119	3.0725	.65075	.05966	2.9544	3.1907	1.67	4.33
	Total	403	3.1670	.63548	.03166	3.1048	3.2293	1.67	4.50
PCR	Single	284	3.1472	.67475	.04004	3.0684	3.2260	1.80	4.40
	Multi	119	3.1782	.70533	.06466	3.0501	3.3062	1.60	4.60
	Total	403	3.1563	.68319	.03403	3.0894	3.2232	1.60	4.60
ECFA	Single	284	3.5731	.68016	.04036	3.4936	3.6525	2.25	4.75

	Multi	119	3.5777	.68639	.06292	3.4531	3.7023	2.25	4.50
	Total	403	3.5744	.68115	.03393	3.5077	3.6411	2.25	4.75
CDMPP	Single	284	3.8310	.62526	.03710	3.7580	3.9040	2.50	5.00
	Multi	119	3.8782	.56078	.05141	3.7764	3.9800	2.75	4.75
	Total	403	3.8449	.60662	.03022	3.7855	3.9043	2.50	5.00
CCFR	Single	284	3.1014	.66012	.03917	3.0243	3.1785	1.40	4.40
	Multi	119	2.9462	.69706	.06390	2.8197	3.0728	1.40	4.40
	Total	403	3.0556	.67410	.03358	2.9896	3.1216	1.40	4.40
OCRE	Single	284	3.3016	.71027	.04215	3.2187	3.3846	1.83	4.83
	Multi	119	3.5154	.61333	.05622	3.4041	3.6267	2.00	4.83
	Total	403	3.3648	.68928	.03434	3.2973	3.4323	1.83	4.83

Table 20. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
DTA	.590	1	401	.443
PCR	.257	1	401	.612
ECFA	.032	1	401	.857
CDMPP	2.242	1	401	.135
CCFR	.275	1	401	.600
OCRE	2.436	1	401	.112

Table 21. ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Between Groups	1.508	1	1.508	3.760	.053
DTA	Within Groups	160.832	401	.401		
	Total	162.340	402			
	Between Groups	.080	1	.080	.172	.679
PCR	Within Groups	187.551	401	.468		
	Total	187.631	402			
ECFA	Between Groups	.002	1	.002	.004	.950

	Within Groups	186.515	401	.465		
	Total	186.517	402			
	Between Groups	.187	1	.187	.506	.477
CDMPP	Within Groups	147.746	401	.368		
	Total	147.932	402			
	Between Groups	2.020	1	2.020	4.483	.035
CCFR	Within Groups	180.655	401	.451		
	Total	182.675	402			
	Between Groups	3.832	1	3.832	8.210	.004
OCRE	Within Groups	187.159	401	.467		
	Total	190.991	402			

The Levene's test shows that the significance (p) values are >0.05 for all the variables, thus accepting that there is no difference in any of the group's variances. Hence, meeting the assumption of homogeneity of variance. Having met the critical assumption of homogeneity of variance, the ANOVA test was performed. Since this test involved only two groups (Single and Multi), the actual difference in the means was apparent in the output and hence no post hoc test was required. The test results with F value and corresponding significance for each variable is shown in the above ANOVA table. The significance (p) values of ANOVA test for all the variables were >0.05 except for CCFR and OCRE. The p value for CCFR was 0.035 and OCRE was 0.004, which are <0.05. Hence, it was found that there was a difference in the mean scores of the variables CCFR and OCRE among the Single and Multi Brand retailers.

Further observing the descriptive statistics table, the mean value of responses of Single Brand retailers (3.1014) was greater than that of Multi Brand retailers (2.9462) for the variable CCFR, while the mean value of responses of Multi Brand retailers (3.5154) was greater than that of Single Brand retailers (3.3016) for the variable OCRE. Thus, concluding that the perceptions among Single and Multi Brand retailers was same towards adopting DTA, PCR, ECFA and CDMPP Capability Dimensions. But, it was different towards adopting CCFR Capability Dimension, where the Single Brand retailers appeared to be more determined in adopting CCFR Capability Dimension compared to

Multi Brand retailers. And, the perception towards OCRE as a result of these five capability adoptions was also different, where the Multi Brand retailers appeared to be slightly more optimistic in the resulting OCRE compared to Single Brand retailers.

A Crosstab analysis of manifest variables corresponding to CCFR dimension was performed to find their individual differences between Single and Multi Brand retailers on their perception towards adopting those capabilities. As observed in figure 13 below, the capabilities Order Online Pickup from Nearest Store and Return Products Purchased Online to Store are the top priorities among all the capabilities related to CCFR. And, Single Brand retailers seem to be more determined towards these capabilities than Multi Brand retailers.

Figure 13. Crosstab for CCFR across No. of Brands

Similarly, a Crosstab analysis of manifest variables corresponding to OCRE dimension was performed to find their individual differences between Single and Multi Brand retailers on their perception towards the resulting experiential aspects. As observed in figure 14 below, the experiential aspects Exciting, Engaging, Unique and Satisfying are the top likely outcomes among all the aspects related to OCRE. And, Multi Brand retailers seem to be more optimistic towards these aspects than Single Brand retailers.

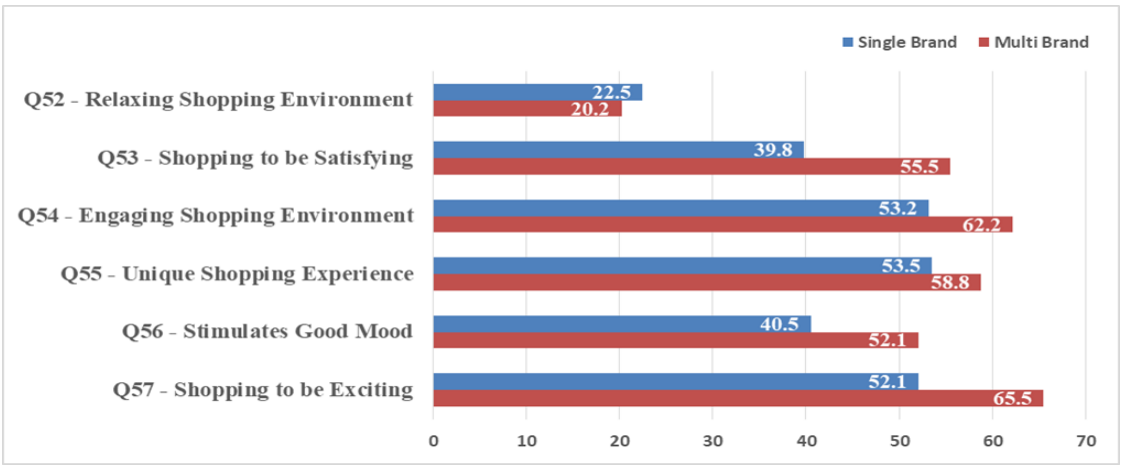


Figure 14. Crosstab for OCRE across No. of Brands

4.4.2 ANOVA-Business Presence

To check if there is any difference in the perception towards the adoption of the Omni-Channel Capability Dimensions and the resulting OCRE among Domestic and Multinational retailers, One-Way ANOVA test was performed. The output of the test is as illustrated in the tables 22, 23 and 24 below.

Table 22. Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
DTA	Domestic	270	3.1727	.64881	.03949	3.0950	3.2504	1.67	4.50
	Multinational	133	3.1555	.60976	.05287	3.0509	3.2601	1.83	4.17
	Total	403	3.1670	.63548	.03166	3.1048	3.2293	1.67	4.50
PCR	Domestic	270	3.1370	.68638	.04177	3.0548	3.2193	1.60	4.60
	Multinational	133	3.1955	.67755	.05875	3.0793	3.3117	1.80	4.40
	Total	403	3.1563	.68319	.03403	3.0894	3.2232	1.60	4.60
ECFA	Domestic	270	3.5583	.66691	.04059	3.4784	3.6382	2.25	4.75
	Multinational	133	3.6071	.71064	.06162	3.4853	3.7290	2.25	4.75
	Total	403	3.5744	.68115	.03393	3.5077	3.6411	2.25	4.75

CDMPP	Domestic	270	3.8407	.59161	.03600	3.7699	3.9116	2.50	5.00
	Multinational	133	3.8534	.63821	.05534	3.7439	3.9629	2.50	5.00
	Total	403	3.8449	.60662	.03022	3.7855	3.9043	2.50	5.00
CCFR	Domestic	270	3.0474	.65450	.03983	2.9690	3.1258	1.40	4.40
	Multinational	133	3.0722	.71450	.06195	2.9496	3.1947	1.40	4.20
	Total	403	3.0556	.67410	.03358	2.9896	3.1216	1.40	4.40
OCRE	Domestic	270	3.4204	.66491	.04047	3.3407	3.5000	1.83	4.83
	Multinational	133	3.2519	.72579	.06293	3.1274	3.3764	2.00	4.67
	Total	403	3.3648	.68928	.03434	3.2973	3.4323	1.83	4.83

Table 23. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
DTA	1.152	1	401	.284
PCR	.028	1	401	.868
ECFA	.322	1	401	.570
CDMPP	2.153	1	401	.143
CCFR	3.547	1	401	.060
OCRE	2.919	1	401	.088

Table 24. ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
DTA	Between Groups	.026	1	.026	.065	.799
	Within Groups	162.313	401	.405		
	Total	162.340	402			
PCR	Between Groups	.304	1	.304	.652	.420
	Within Groups	187.327	401	.467		
	Total	187.631	402			
ECFA	Between Groups	.212	1	.212	.457	.499
	Within Groups	186.304	401	.465		

	Total	186.517	402			
CDMPP	Between Groups	.014	1	.014	.039	.844
	Within Groups	147.918	401	.369		
	Total	147.932	402			
CCFR	Between Groups	.055	1	.055	.120	.729
	Within Groups	182.620	401	.455		
	Total	182.675	402			
OCRE	Between Groups	2.530	1	2.530	5.383	.021
	Within Groups	188.461	401	.470		
	Total	190.991	402			

The Levene's test shows that the significance (p) values are >0.05 for all the variables, thus accepting that there is no difference in any of the group's variances. Hence, meeting the assumption of homogeneity of variance. Having met the critical assumption of homogeneity of variance, the ANOVA test was performed. Since this test involved only two groups (Domestic and Multinational), the actual difference in the means was apparent in the output and hence no post hoc test was required. The test results with F value and corresponding significance for each variable is shown in the above ANOVA table. The significance (p) values of ANOVA test for all the variables were >0.05 except for OCRE. The p value for OCRE was 0.021, which is <0.05. Hence, it was found that there was no difference in the mean scores of any of the variables except OCRE among the Domestic and Multinational retailers.

Further observing the descriptive statistics table, the mean value of responses of Domestic retailers (3.4204) was greater than that of Multinational retailers (3.2519) for the variable OCRE. Thus, concluding that the perceptions among Domestic and Multinational retailers was same towards adopting DTA, PCR, ECFA, CDMPP and CCFR Capability Dimensions. And, the perception towards OCRE as a result of these five capability adoptions was different, where the Domestic retailers appeared to be slightly more optimistic in the resulting OCRE compared to Multinational retailers.

A Crosstab analysis of manifest variables corresponding to OCRE dimension was performed to find their individual differences between Domestic and Multinational

retailers on their perception towards the resulting experiential aspects. As observed in figure 15 below, the experiential aspects Exciting, Engaging, Unique and Satisfying are the top likely outcomes among all the aspects related to OCRE. And, Domestic retailers seem to be more optimistic towards these aspects than Multinational retailers.

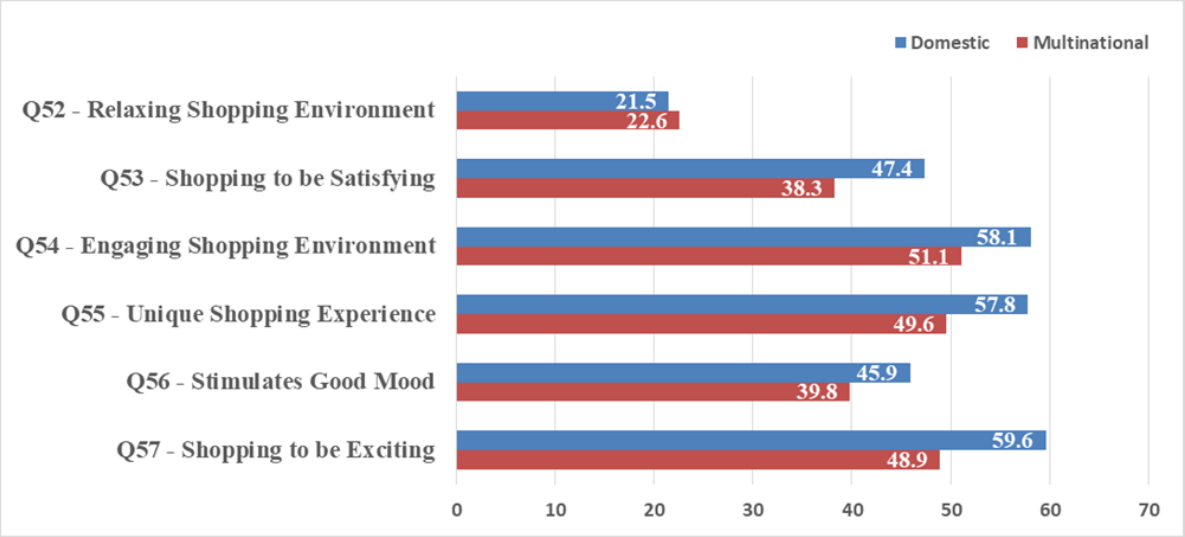


Figure 15. Crosstab for OCRE across Business Presence

4.5 Omni-Channel Capabilities Concerning Domestic Single Brand Retailers

As observed in the respondent spread of Apparel and Fashion retailers in this research, about 70% of the respondents were Single Brand retailers and about 67% were Domestic retailers. Considering the high response rate of this group of retailers and significant proportion of domestic retailers present in the Indian retail market, who are also contemplating towards Omni-Channel transformation, a detailed analysis of the perception of Domestic Single Brand retailers was carried out. Thus, a Crosstab analysis of manifest variables (multi item scales) representing individual capabilities corresponding to each of the five key capability dimensions was performed in order to find the capabilities that are perceived to be top priority to be adopted by Domestic Single Brand retailers pertaining to Apparel and Fashion category. The results of the analysis corresponding to each of the five key Capability Dimensions are illustrated below along with respective charts.

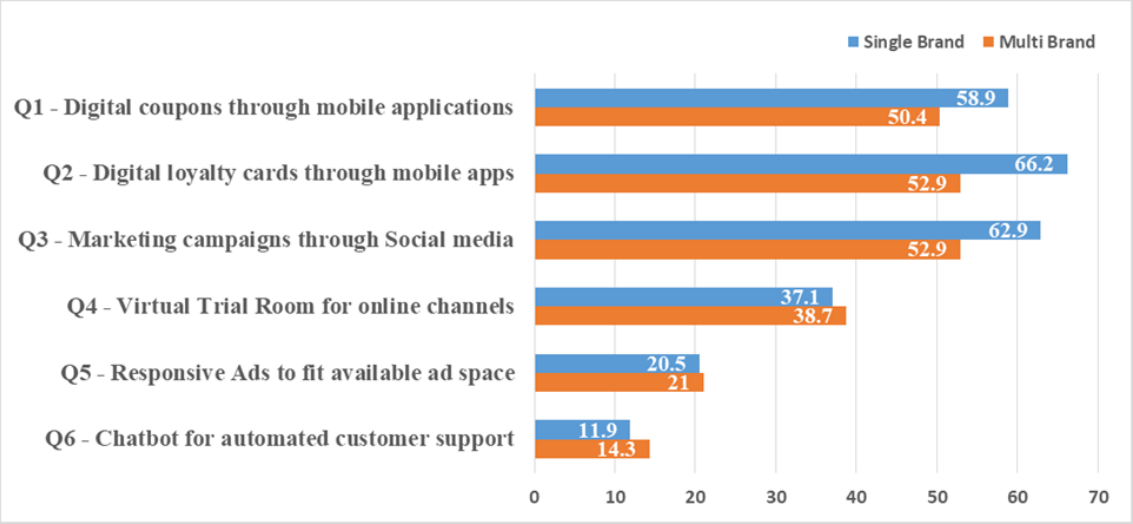


Figure 16. Perception of Capabilities with respect to DTA

From the responses related to the perception of Domestic Single Brand retailers towards various capabilities with respect to DTA, illustrated in figure 16, about 66.2% of the respondents believe that enabling digital loyalty cards through mobile applications (Q2) will be the top priority capability, about 62.9% of the respondents believe that enabling marketing campaigns through social media platforms (Q3) will be the top priority capability, and about 58.9% of the respondents believe that enabling digital coupons through mobile applications (Q1) will be the top priority capability, to be focused in order to elevate OCRE. While, just 37.1% believe that adopting a Virtual Trial Room for online channels (Q4) will be the top priority capability, 20.5% believe that developing Responsive Ads that automatically adjust to available ad space through Ad network platforms (Q5) will be the top priority capability and 11.9% believe that adopting a Chatbot for automated customer support (Q6) will be the top priority capability, to be focused in order to elevate OCRE. Thus, Q1, Q2 and Q3 were considered to be the key capabilities with respect to DTA towards Omni-Channel adoption in order to elevate the OCRE.

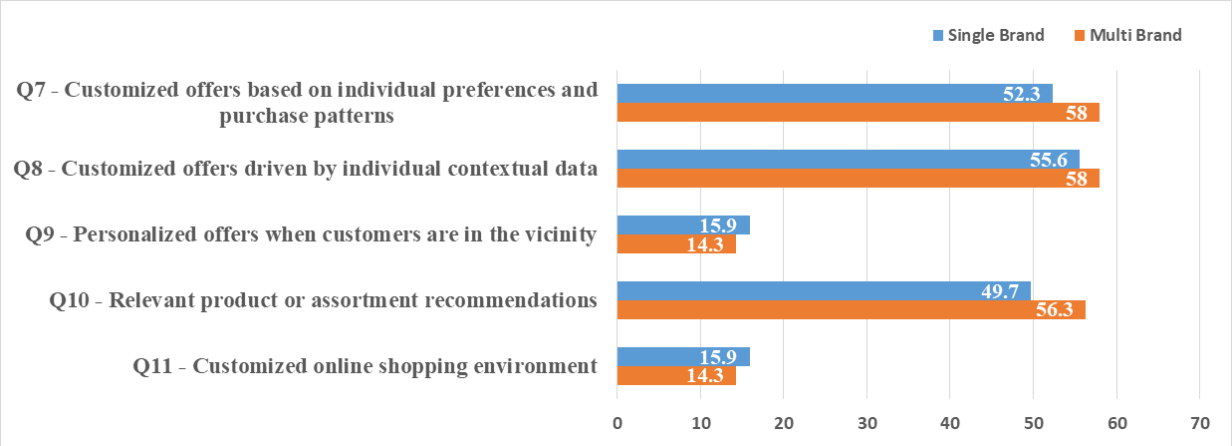


Figure 17. Perception of Capabilities with respect to PCR

From the responses related to the perception of Domestic Single Brand retailers towards various capabilities with respect to PCR, illustrated in figure 17, about 55.6% of the respondents said customized offers driven by individual contextual (events or situations) data (Q8) will be the top priority capability, about 52.3% of the respondents said customized offers based on individual preferences and purchase patterns (Q7) will be the top priority capability, and about 49.7% of the respondents said recommending products or assortments relevant to the customer (Q10) will be the top priority capability, to be focused in order to elevate OCRE. While, just 15.9% said personalized offers sent to customers when they are in the vicinity of store location (Q9) and customized online shopping environment (Q11) will be the top priority capabilities, to be focused in order to elevate OCRE. Thus, Q7, Q8 and Q10 were considered to be the key capabilities with respect to PCR towards Omni-Channel adoption in order to elevate the OCRE.

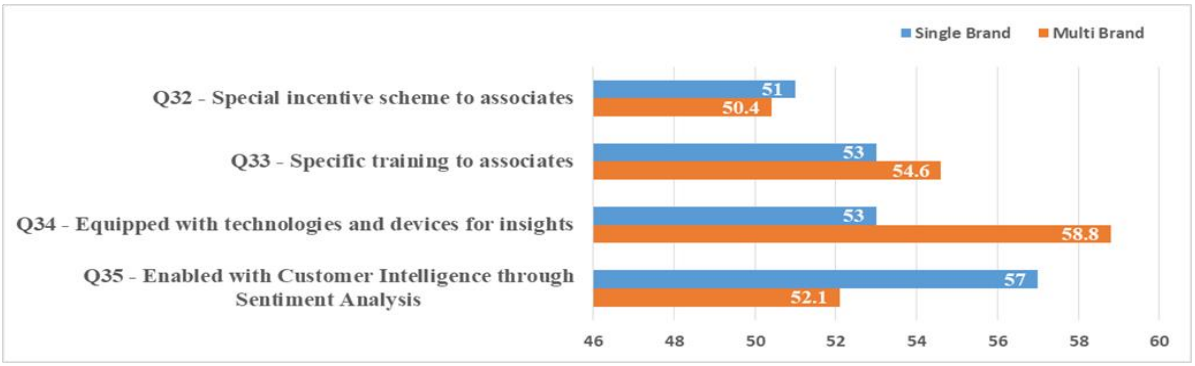


Figure 18. Perception of Capabilities with respect to ECFA

From the responses related to the perception of Domestic Single Brand retailers towards various capabilities with respect to ECFA, illustrated in figure 18, about 57% of the respondents said enabling associates with customer intelligence through Sentiment Analysis of social media messages (Q35) will be the top priority capability, about 53% of the respondents said providing specific training to associates on cross-channel responsibilities (Q33) and equipping associates with technologies and devices for insights on products, customers and purchases data (Q34) will be the top priority capabilities, and about 51% of the respondents said providing special incentive or bonus scheme to associates with cross-channel responsibilities (Q32) will be the top priority capability, to be focused in order to elevate OCRE. Thus, Q32, Q33, Q34 and Q35 were considered to be the key capabilities with respect to ECFA towards Omni-Channel adoption in order to elevate the OCRE.

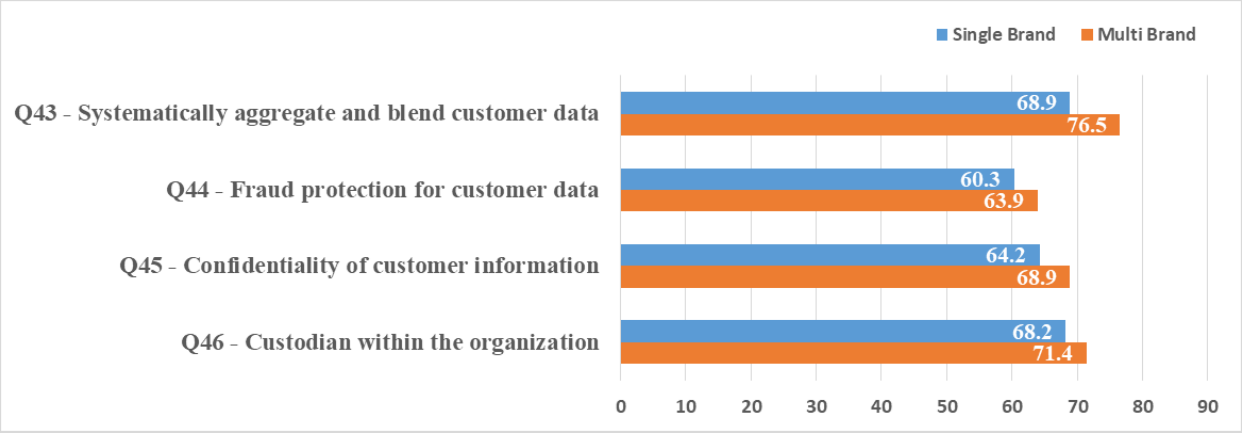


Figure 19. Perception of Capabilities with respect to CDMPP

From the responses related to the perception of Domestic Single Brand retailers towards various capabilities with respect to CDMPP, illustrated in figure 19, about 68.9% of the respondents believe that systematically aggregating and blending customer data from multiple channels (Q43) will be the top priority capability, about 68.2% of the respondents believe that establishing a custodian within the organization for owning, controlling and sharing customer data (Q46) will be the top priority capability, about 64.2% of the respondents believe that establishing confidentiality of customer

information stored on various platforms (Q45) will be the top priority capability, and about 60.3% of the respondents believe that adopting fraud protection for customer data passing through various systems (Q44) will be the top priority capability, to be focused in order to elevate OCRE. Thus, Q43, Q44, Q45 and Q46 were considered to be the key capabilities with respect to CDMPP towards Omni-Channel adoption in order to elevate the OCRE.

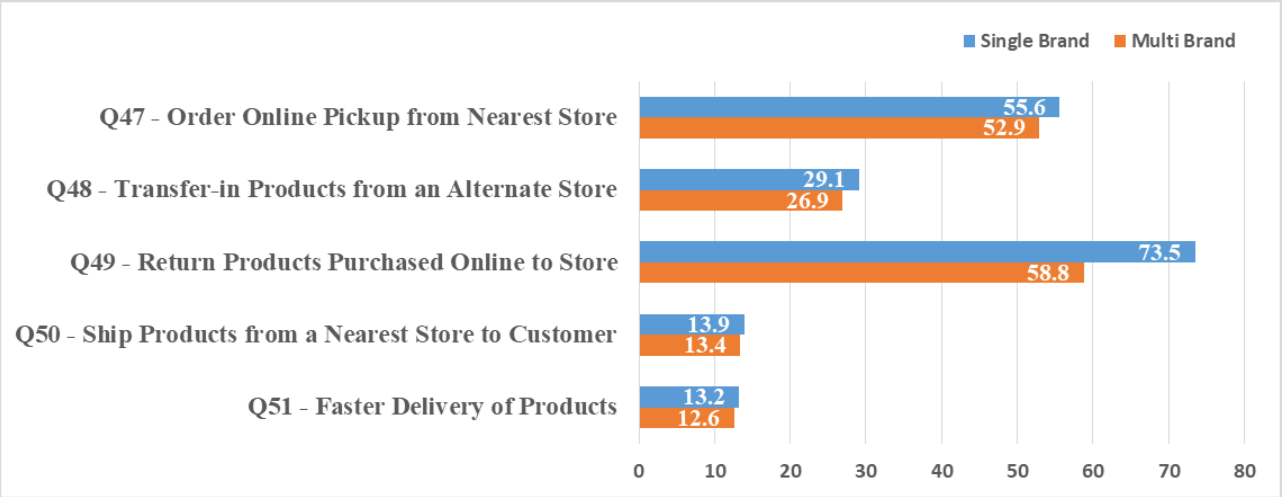


Figure 20. Perception of Capabilities with respect to CCFR

From the responses related to the perception of Domestic Single Brand retailers towards various capabilities with respect to CCFR, illustrated in figure 20, a whopping 73.5% of the respondents agree that allowing customers purchasing products online to return them at a nearest store (Q49) will be the top priority capability, and 55.6% of the respondents agree that allowing customers ordering products online to collect them from a nearest store (Q47) will be the top priority capability, to be focused in order to elevate OCRE. While, just 29.1% agree that transferring-in products from an alternate store when unavailable for customers to collect at the chosen store (Q48), 13.9% agree that shipping products from a nearest store when the warehouse is farther from preferred delivery location (Q50) and 13.2% agree that delivering products within few hours or same day or on a selected date to the preferred location (Q51) will be the top priority capabilities, to be focused in order to elevate OCRE. Thus, Q47 and Q49 were considered to be the key

capabilities with respect to CCFR towards Omni-Channel adoption in order to elevate the OCRE.

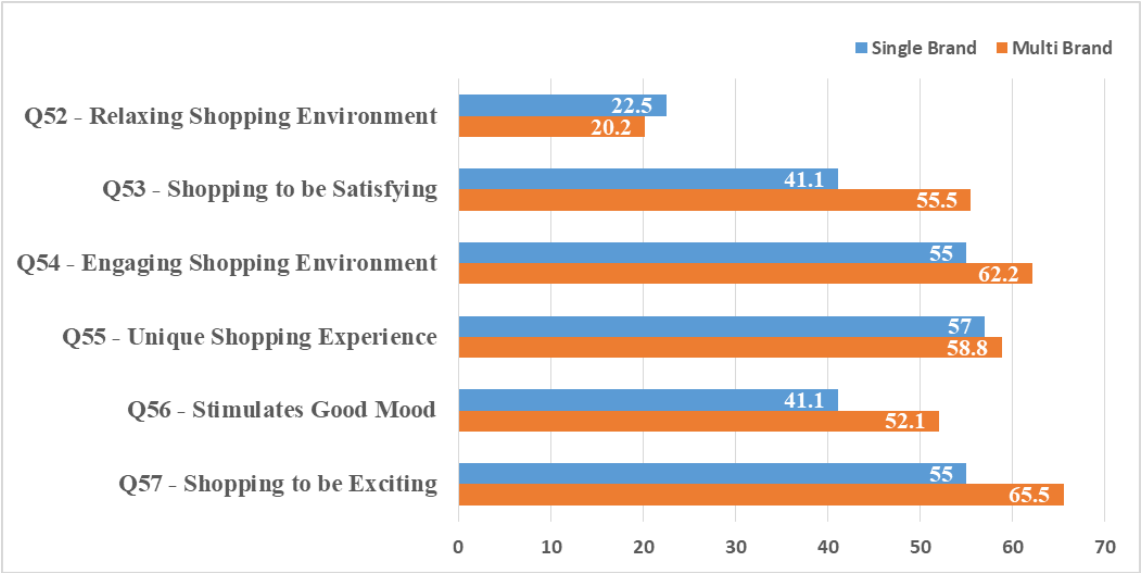


Figure 21. Perception of Experiential Aspects with respect to OCRE

From the responses related to the perception of Domestic Single Brand retailers towards various experiential aspects with respect to OCRE, illustrated in figure 21, about 57% of the respondents believe that the adoption of key Omni-Channel Retail Capabilities will indeed provide a unique shopping experience to customers (Q55), about 55% of the respondents believe that it creates an engaging shopping environment for customers (Q54), and about 55% believe that it makes shopping to be more exciting to customers (Q57), resulting in an elevated OCRE. While, just 41.1% believe that it makes shopping to be satisfying for customers (Q53), 41.1% believe that it stimulates a good mood in customers during shopping (Q56), and 22.5% believe that it creates a relaxing shopping environment for customers (Q52), resulting in an elevated OCRE. Thus, Q54, Q55 and Q57 were considered to be the key experiential aspects that would truly elevate OCRE as a result of adopting various Omni-Channel capabilities.

The above outcomes of Crosstabs analysis corresponding to each of the five key Capability Dimensions ascertain the Omni-Channel Capabilities that are perceived to be top priority to be adopted by Domestic Single Brand retailers pertaining to Apparel and

Fashion category. The Crosstabs outcome along with SEM results supported in building a Capability Priority Framework, as a solution to be recommended for these retailers towards embarking on the Omni-Channel journey, in order to elevate the Omni-Channel Retail Experience. The framework has been explained in detail in the section dedicated for Discussions.

4.6 Summary of Findings

The findings of the research are summarized pertinent to each research objective along with the research method used in order to realize the expected outcome. It is as illustrated in table 25 below.

Table 25. Summary of Findings

Sl. No.	Objective	Method	Findings
1	To identify the Omni-Channel Constructs (Capability Dimensions) and Capabilities influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience for Organized Retailers.	Extensive Review of Literature and subsequent Qualitative Study with Expert Interviews of retail executives	About 20 Omni-Channel Constructs (Dimensions) denoting a preliminary list of independent variables were identified. Additionally, several factors pertaining to Omni-Channel Retail Capabilities were also extracted from prior literature as well as interviews.
2	To ascertain the Capability Dimensions and Omni-Channel Capabilities influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience specific to	Triangulation of Qualitative Data, Development of Manifest Items for each Dimension and subsequent Pilot Study of	About 9 Omni-Channel Constructs (Dimensions) denoting the final list of independent variables and 51 corresopnding Manifest Items (Capabilities) were ascertained. And, about 6

	Apparel and Fashion retailers in India.	Quantitative Measurements	Manifest Items pertaining to dependent variable Omni-Channel Retail Experience were also ascertained.
3	To derive the most critical Dimensions and Capabilities influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience specific to Apparel and Fashion retailers in India.	Quantitative Study	Applying the SEM technique that involved testing the Measurement Model followed by the Structural Model for the sample data collected, about 5 Omni-Channel Constructs and corresponding Measurement Items were established to be the most critical Dimensions and Capabilities respectively, influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience.
4	To determine a plausible approach for Apparel and Fashion retailers in terms of key Capabilities and Dimensions towards elevating Omni-Channel Retail Experience.	Quantitative Study	Based on the associations between Omni-Channel Constructs and Omni-Channel Retail Experience derived from SEM, and the top priority Capabilities derived from ANOVA and Crosstabs, a Capability Priority Framework was developed as an implementable solution, suggesting to appropriately emphasize on the 5 key Capability Dimensions and 16 key Omni-Channel

			Capabilities, in order to elevate Omni-Channel Retail Experience for Domestic Single Brand retailers pertaining to Apparel and Fashion category.

5. DISCUSSION

Increasing usage of digital devices and applications by customers is encouraging the necessity for Omni-Channel Retailing, leading to the amalgamation of online and offline channels. Pure play online as well as traditional brick-and-mortar retailers are realizing the importance of alternate channels and having them revolve around customer centric features and processes to create a seamless experience, thus compelling them to focus on this evolving trend. It was gathered from a thorough review of prior literature that Omni-Channel Retailing is considered to be the future of retailing and retailers are finding the right approach to be successful in adopting this emerging paradigm. And that, they are committed to invest heavily in creating an Omni-Channel platform for their customers, thus concurring with the theory of Multi-Channel Retailing and The Dialectic Theory of Retail institutional change discussed in the Introduction section at the beginning.

It was also realized that Omni-Channel is a growing area of interest for most retailers and is an emerging concept in India. But, there is little evidence of action in this space particularly in India creating a subverted outlook for enhancing the customer experience. Hence, it was imperative to fill this gap by finding the key Capability Dimensions and Omni-Channel Capabilities that significantly influence Omni-Channel Retail Experience, and suggest a plausible approach for retailers. Also, since Apparel and Fashion category was apparently the most prominent category in the Organized Retail business in India, the research was conducted specifically for this category of retailing.

The research adopted a Mixed Methods approach using Sequential Exploratory Design in order to examine these aspects, which includes an initial Qualitative Study followed by a Quantitative Study. About twenty Omni-Channel Constructs (Dimensions) influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience were extracted from extensive review of prior literature. These constructs extracted were then triangulated with the ones elicited from Qualitative Study, to identify the dimensions relevant from the context of Apparel and Fashion retailers in India. It was also ascertained that by and large most of the capabilities that retailers are building or intend to build, including Multi-Channel or Omni-Channel Capabilities, in general have a strong emphasis towards their larger purpose of elevating the retail experience aspects of their customers.

Then, following a standard scale development procedure, the research developed a suitable questionnaire instrument for the Quantitative study with multi-item measurement scales grounded in the literature, to measure the importance of each of the constructs that are imperative for retailers in India, as well as their influence on Omni-Channel Retail Experience. The instrument was evaluated for its Content and Face Validity through expert reviews. And, subsequently a Pilot Study was conducted to test its Consistency, Internal Validity and Reliability Analysis through Cronbach's Alpha values. The questionnaire instrument was revised as a result of these validation procedures where some of the variables were removed or rephrased as per the appropriateness for retailers in India. The final updated version had nine predominant constructs and fifty-one corresponding measurement items in total pertaining to Omni-Channel Retail capabilities measuring respective constructs, for further investigation of their influence on Omni-Channel Retail Experience through a Quantitative Study.

The study received complete responses from 403 retail executives. All the scales were rechecked for internal consistency and found to have high reliability with Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7. There were no major differences observed between the sub-samples on any of the categorical variables. The data was also checked for Multivariate Normality, Homoscedasticity, Multicollinearity and Linearity, and ascertained that it complies with all the assumptions necessary to proceed with a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis.

The SEM was executed on the total sample of 403 executives, to evaluate the conceptualized framework of multiple Omni-Channel Constructs influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience, specified a priori from literature review and later revised based on triangulation of constructs and pilot study. The overall model indicated a good fit as all the model indices observed were in the acceptable range. The Measurement Model indicated a good fit as all individual scale items loaded significantly ($p < 0.001$) on the respective Omni-Channel constructs. The Structural Model was examined to find the degree to which the Omni-Channel Constructs were influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience and the direction of their influence, using the standardized estimates and probability values for the model.

It was established that the five dimensions Digital Technology Adoption (DTA) (Juaneda-Ayensa et al., 2016), Personalized Content and Recommendations (PCR) (Purcărea, 2016), Empowered Customer Facing Associates (ECFA) (Hentschel, 2016), Customer Data Management and Privacy Protection (CDMPP) (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014) and Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns (CCFR) (Hortaçsu & Syverson, 2015) were significantly influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience (OCRE) (Bagdare & Jain, 2013), partially concurring with the framework conceptualized earlier. It was furthermore established that higher rate of adoption of digital technologies, larger focus on customer data privacy protection and added options for Cross-Channel fulfillments and returns would result in a positive effect, thus increasing the OCRE of customers, which was in line with the literature that discussed these constructs. But then, over-personalization, hyper-recommendations and hyperactive customer facing associates would result in a negative effect, thus decreasing the OCRE of customers.

While the remaining four dimensions Unified Organization Structure and Change Management (UOSCM), In-store Technology Adoption (ITA), Consistent Brand Image across Channels (CBIC) and Online and Offline Stores with Distinctive Features (SDF) did not have a significant influence, differing from the conceptualized framework. The reasons for the difference could be multiple for this behavior, which needs empirical investigation in future research. But, at this point, for the dimensions UOSCM, ITA, CBIC and SDF there seems to be a strong sense of either saturation or completely unaware on the way forward for adopting pertaining Omni-Channel Capabilities, and hence can be ignored from the framework conceptualized. The findings helped in discovering new knowledge in terms of Omni-Channel Constructs that are empirically crucial for retailers to focus in order to elevate Omni-Channel Retail Experience for their customers.

The research further applied ANOVA technique to ascertain the differences in the perception of retailers towards the adoption of the five key capability dimensions and perception towards OCRE as a result of these capability adoptions. The analysis was across different groups of retailers based on Organizational demographics such as Number of Brands (Single, Multi) and Business Presence (Domestic, Multinational). It was found that the perceptions among Single vs Multi Brand retailers was same towards

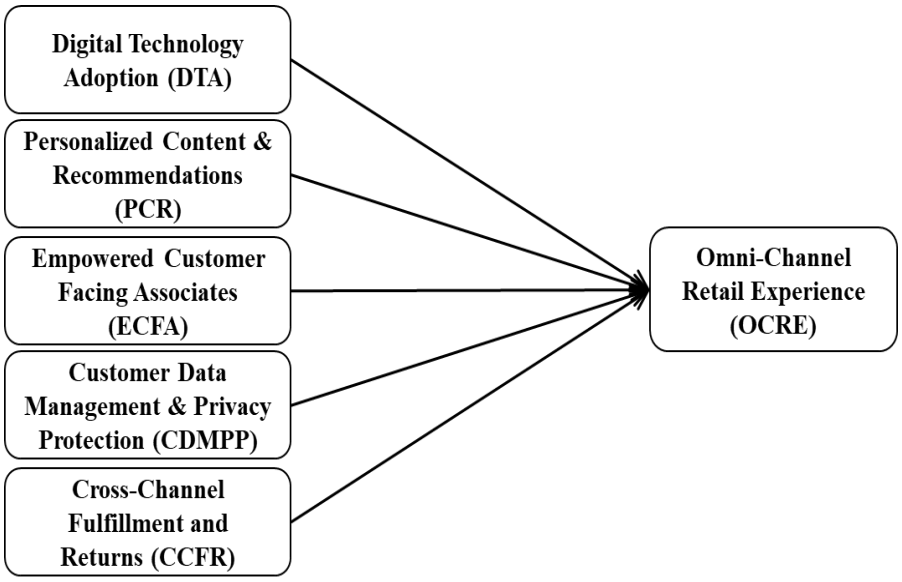
adopting DTA, PCR, ECFA and CDMPP dimensions, but was different towards adopting CCFR dimension. Single Brand retailers appeared to be more determined in adopting CCFR compared to Multi Brand retailers. The perceptions among Domestic vs Multinational retailers was same towards all the five dimensions.

The research then applied Crosstabs technique to perform a detailed analysis of the perception of Domestic Single Brand retailers towards individual capabilities corresponding to each of the five key Capability Dimensions discussed above. It was found that about sixteen capabilities across these dimensions were perceived to be top priority by these retailers. And, three experiential aspects of OCRE were perceived to be more prominent. Accordingly, Digital coupons, Digital loyalty cards and Social media campaigns were the key capabilities with respect to DTA. Aggregation of customer data, Fraud protection for customer data, Confidentiality of information and Custodian for customer data were the key capabilities with respect to CDMPP. Order online collect at a nearest store and Purchase online return at a nearest store were the key capabilities with respect to CCFR.

Offers based on purchase preferences, Offers driven by individual context and relevant product recommendations were the key capabilities with respect to PCR. Special incentive to associates, Specific training to associates, Equip associates with purchase insights and Customer Intelligence through Sentiment Analysis were the key capabilities with respect to ECFA. Lastly, Engaging, Unique and Exciting were the key experiential aspects with respect to OCRE. These findings helped in discovering new knowledge in terms of key Omni-Channel Capabilities that are considered top priority towards Omni-Channel adoption. The findings aided in building a Capability Priority Framework as a solution recommended for these retailers to elevate the Omni-Channel Retail Experience. The details of the framework is explained later in this section.

5.1 Final Conceptual Framework

The final conceptual framework based on the results of the SEM analyzed and discussed in this research is as depicted in figure 22 below, with the five Capability Dimensions that are significantly influencing the OCRE of customers with respect to Organized Retailers in India focused on Apparel and Fashion category.


Digital Technology Adoption (DTA)
Personalized Content & Recommendations (PCR)
Empowered Customer Facing Associates (ECFA)
Customer Data Management & Privacy Protection (CDMPP)
Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns (CCFR)
Omni-Channel Retail Experience (OCRE)

Source: Developed by the Author

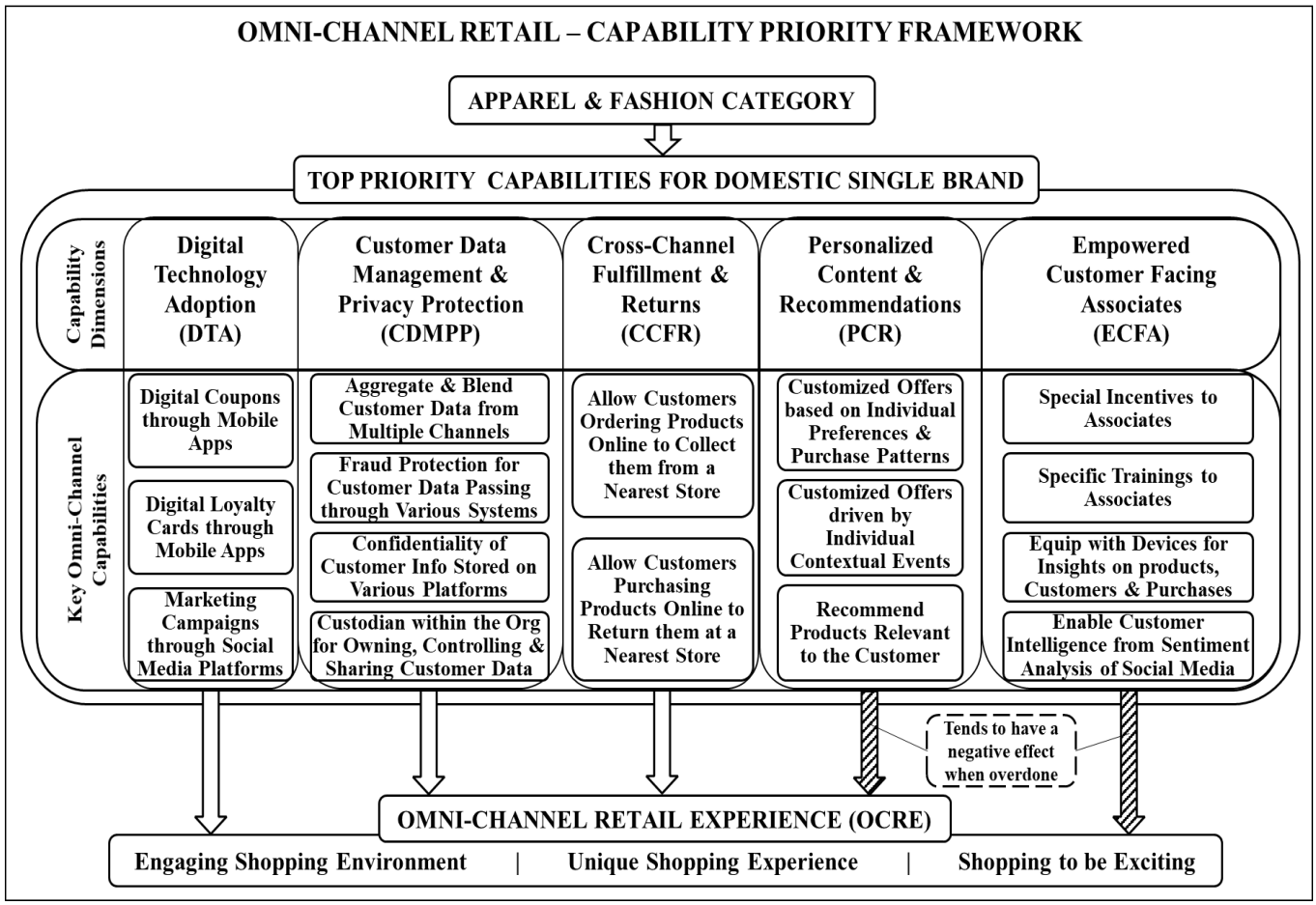
Figure 22. Final Conceptual Framework

This research recognizes that retailers are keen on adopting various capabilities in transforming their traditional brick-and-mortar stores alongside integrating online channels, to create an Omni-Channel engagement with customers. Digital disruption is certainly driving retailers to redesign their operating models, while they realize the continued importance of their physical stores. And, in order to meet customers' expectations, retailers need to empower their associates with hand-held technology, and empower customers with self-service kiosks to simplify and speed up the buying process. It would also be important to ensure congruence across channels to improve the retailer's image. Finally, there needs to be a firm focus towards ensuring customer data security and providing enhanced Cross-Channel delivery services.

5.2 Plausible Solution for Apparel and Fashion Retailers

Considering the five critical Capability Dimensions: Digital Technology Adoption (DTA), Personalized Content and Recommendations (PCR), Empowered Customer Facing Associates (ECFA), Customer Data Management and Privacy Protection (CDMPP) and Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns (CCFR) that are significantly

influencing Omni-Channel Retail Experience (OCRE), as derived from Structural Equation Modeling, and the corresponding key Omni-Channel Capabilities that are perceived to be top priority to be adopted by Domestic Single Brand retailers, as derived from Crosstabs, this research developed a Capability Priority Framework as a solution for these retailers pertaining to Apparel and Fashion category, towards embarking on the Omni-Channel Retail journey, in order to elevate the Omni-Channel Retail Experience. It also suggests the key experiential aspects that are realized as a result of adopting these Omni-Channel Capabilities. The Capability Priority Framework that emerged from this research is portrayed in figure 23 below.


OMNI-CHANNEL RETAIL – CAPABILITY PRIORITY FRAMEWORK
APPAREL & FASHION CATEGORY
TOP PRIORITY CAPABILITIES FOR DOMESTIC SINGLE BRAND
Capability Dimensions
Digital Technology Adoption (DTA)
Customer Data Management & Privacy Protection (CDMPP)
Cross-Channel Fulfillment & Returns (CCFR)
Personalized Content & Recommendations (PCR)
Empowered Customer Facing Associates (ECFA)
Key Omni-Channel Capabilities
Digital Coupons through Mobile Apps
Digital Loyalty Cards through Mobile Apps
Marketing Campaigns through Social Media Platforms
Aggregate & Blend Customer Data from Multiple Channels
Fraud Protection for Customer Data Passing through Various Systems
Confidentiality of Customer Info Stored on Various Platforms
Custodian within the Org for Owning, Controlling & Sharing Customer Data
Allow Customers Ordering Products Online to Collect them from a Nearest Store
Allow Customers Purchasing Products Online to Return them at a Nearest Store
Customized Offers based on Individual Preferences & Purchase Patterns
Customized Offers driven by Individual Contextual Events
Recommend Products Relevant to the Customer
Special Incentives to Associates
Specific Trainings to Associates
Equip with Devices for Insights on products, Customers & Purchases
Enable Customer Intelligence from Sentiment Analysis of Social Media
Tends to have a negative effect when overdone
OMNI-CHANNEL RETAIL EXPERIENCE (OCRE)
Engaging Shopping Environment | Unique Shopping Experience | Shopping to be Exciting

Source: Developed by the Author

Figure 23. Capability Priority Framework

The framework suggests retailers to prioritize and strongly emphasize on capabilities with respect to Digital Technology Adoption, Customer Data Management and Privacy Protection and Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns. While the capabilities with respect to Personalized Content and Recommendation and Empowered Customer Facing Associates are also crucial, they should be thoroughly evaluated in order to ensure there is no hyper activity in these capabilities as they could lead to a dip in customer experience when overdone. As these retailers plan to employ the above framework as part of the Omni-Channel implementation, they should essentially focus on the emphasized Omni-Channel Capabilities under respective Capability Dimensions right away, in order to swiftly build the necessary competitive advantage in the Apparel and Fashion Retail segment.

It is also advised that they should give due consideration to the direction of influence as analyzed from the Structural Model, where DTA, CDMPP and CCFR were found to be positively influencing OCRE, while PCR and ECFA were found to be negatively influencing OCRE. Thus, suggesting that the trend of over personalization, hyper recommendations and over powered associates can apparently be deterrent in elevating the Omni-Channel Retail Experience, and that they should aptly balance between personalization and privacy.

The research thus establishes a plausible approach that enables Apparel and Fashion retailers in India to operationalize Omni-Channel Retailing to gain a competitive advantage, as they embark on the Omni-Channel journey. It serves as a basis for Organized Retailers in India to realign their strategy towards elevating Omni-Channel Retail Experience. As customers expect a seamless experience anytime anywhere, it would be vital for Organized Retailers in India to consider the key capabilities that emerged from this research, in order to reinforce their customer experience elements. Retailers who demonstrate these elements earlier could gain a strategic advantage in India, thus concurring with the theoretical framework on Retail Customer Experience or Omni-Channel Retail Experience explained earlier in the Introduction section.

5.3 Implications of the Study

The study enables Retailers, Consultants and Researchers to gain a better understanding of the factors that elevate Omni-Channel Retail Experience of customers, which in turn will create a positive business outcome for Organized Retailing in India. It will help them prioritize the Omni-Channel Capabilities accordingly. This research adds to the subject matter of Omni-Channel Retail and provides a plausible approach towards Strategic Retailing. The findings of this research ascertain the critical Capability Dimensions and key Omni-Channel Capabilities that Apparel and Fashion Retailers in India need to adopt towards Omni-Channel transformation and hence elevating Omni-Channel Retail experience.

The Capability Priority Framework developed in this research serves as an accelerator for strategy development and operationalization of Omni-Channel Retailing, enabling retailers to build and reinforce Omni-Channel Capabilities swiftly. The framework provides an implementable solution approach containing five critical Capability Dimensions and sixteen key Omni-Channel Capabilities in total that need to be focused right away, to create a competitive advantage.

The results of the research is expected to serve as a basis for retailers in India to develop suitable Omni-Channel strategies in order to build experience driven processes for their customers. It contributes to the literature on Omni-Channel, serving as a knowledge base for retailers to evaluate their efforts that are underway towards this development. It helps them identify improvement areas to realign the key elements, by reinforcing the Omni-Channel Strategy with faster speed to market for a seamless customer experience, and make any correction to the changes already made in this area. It is intended to influence retail organizational level considerations in order to accelerate the emerging Omni-Channel Retail paradigm. It also contributes to the literature on emerging mixed methods research design.

6. CONCLUSIONS

As consumers engage with retailers through multiple touch points, their experience should be well synchronized across all channels. But, this is not always the case yet, since most of the channels do not appear to be as seamless as they should be. It requires significant investment in technology, infrastructure and operations along with organizational change. Retailers must harness technology in order to create new capabilities and refined processes. As Omni-Channel Retailing is emerging swiftly, retailers are looking for the right approach to successfully adopt this strategy.

Retailers operating as pure play online or as Brick-and-Mortar stores are realizing the importance of alternate channels, thus contemplating on investing in an Omni-Channel platform. As customer expectations for seamless experience intensify, and retailers' organizational, technical, and operational barriers remain hard to overcome, it would be vital for Organized Retailers in India to consider the key capabilities that emerged from this study, to formulate a suitable strategy towards elevating Omni-Channel Retail Experience.

This research explored the views of Apparel and Fashion Retailers in an emerging market like India towards ascertaining the key Omni-Channel Retail Capabilities. The findings of the research extract key Capability Dimensions and Omni-Channel Capabilities essential for retailers to progress in the Omni-Channel journey and elevate the Omni-Channel Retail Experience. The key dimensions that emerged were Digital Technology Adoption (DTA), Customer Data Management and Privacy Protection (CDMPP), Cross-Channel Fulfillment and Returns (CCFR), Empowering Customer Facing Associates (ECFA) and Personalized Content and Recommendation (PCR).

Retailers can plan to iteratively develop or redesign the key Omni-Channel Capabilities corresponding to these dimension to build a seamless experience for their customers, and those who would be able to adopt these capabilities earlier can gain a strategic advantage in India. The outcome of the research suggests a plausible approach for retailers that they need to strongly emphasize on capabilities related to DTA, CDMPP and CCFR dimensions on priority as they emerge to have the most significant and positive influence on OCRE, and then thoroughly evaluate on capabilities related to

ECFA and PCR dimensions so as to ensure there is no hyper activity in these aspects, as they emerge to have a significant and negative influence on OCRE when overdone.

Emphasizing on these critical Capability Dimensions that were examined, they need to focus on the underlying factors representing Omni-Channel Capabilities elevating Omni-Channel Retail Experience, illustrated in the Capability Priority Framework developed as a solution outcome from this research. The capabilities that were perceived to be top priority by Domestic Single Brand retailers are as listed below:

DTA: Digital Coupons through mobile applications, Digital Loyalty Cards through mobile applications, and Marketing Campaigns through Social Media platforms.

CDMPP: Aggregate and Blend customer data from multiple channels, Fraud Protection for customer data passing through various systems, Confidentiality of customer information stored on various platforms, and Establish custodian within the organization for owning, controlling and sharing customer data.

CCFR: Allow customers ordering products online to collect them from a nearest store, and Allow customers purchasing products online to return them at a nearest store.

PCR: Customize offers based on individual preferences and purchase patterns, Customize offers driven by individual contextual data (events or situations), and Recommend products or assortments relevant to the customer.

ECFA: Provide special incentives or bonus scheme to associates with cross-channel responsibilities, Provide specific training to associates on cross-channel responsibilities, Equip associates with technologies and devices for insights on products, customers and purchases data, and Enable associates with customer intelligence through Sentiment Analysis of Social Media messages.

The findings of this research will boost Organized Retailers to evolve on their Omni-Channel journey creating a sustainable competitive advantage. It provides an approach for Apparel and Fashion Retailers in India to evolve on their Omni-Channel strategy, as they embark on this path. The approach can be used by these retailers as a self-intuitive artefact, or by management and technology consultants for administering it to them.

6.1 Limitations of the Study

This study focuses exclusively on the Organized Retail sector in India. The study is confined to retailers pertaining to Apparel and Fashion category, as it is apparently the most prominent category in the Organized Retail business in India. Also, the study builds a solution framework specific to Domestic Single Brand retailers, as this group of retailers were found to be proportionately top respondents in this study. The findings are limited to the extent it is established through expert opinions and experiences, as it was not be feasible to get every retailer's view as part of this research. The research was conducted with the belief that the expert respondents selected were representatives of the population, but may not be representatives in true statistical sense.

The respondents' spread was not proportional or significantly large across various designations from various areas within the retail organization. Hence, designation-wise or area-wise insights of the data could not be established. As results are drawn for a specific category (Apparel and Fashion) of retailers, retail industry wide standardization of the approach was not in scope. Lastly, applying the suggested approach, providing prescriptive actions, building road-maps or evaluate progress for any specific retailer was not in scope of this research. Regardless of these limitations, it is expected that the findings would serve as a basis for developing further Omni-Channel strategies and efficient customer-centric processes, in order to accelerate in this emerging paradigm.

6.2 Recommendations for Further Research

The study provides a conceptual background encouraging further research in this domain. Some of the areas that can be addressed in future research are as follows. Drawing conclusions from broader sample spread across all retail formats pan India could help in assertively generalizing the findings to the larger retail population. Ensuring the respondents' spread to be proportional and sufficiently large across various designations and from various areas within the retail organization will help in drawing designation-wise or area-wise insights accordingly. Studying opinions of retail executives on Omni-Channel from other emerging markets could add more value to the generalization of findings.

On the other hand, similar research can be conducted for other specific categories of retail such as Electronics, Groceries, General Merchandise, and Footwear etc. to generate solutions for specific needs. Triangulation of responses from customers' perspective regarding their experiences with respect to Omni-Channel can also be addressed in future research. There is also a wide scope to bring in empirical evidences to the knowledge base through case study based research of specific retail brands in India and across the world.

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5. Alliance Management Studies International Conference (AMSICON-2019), 12/4/2019, Ascertaining the Key Omni-Channel Retail Capability Priority for Typical Formats in the Context of Indian Organized Retailers.